STARTLING STORY, "CONQUERED BY THE DEAD," NEXT WEEK'S LEDGER.

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THE MASKED SINGER.

Being the Narrative of a Magic Ring and a Reporter's Unprintable Scoop.

By F. W. PULLIUM,

"Fresh pepsin gum! Sweet and fresh!" piped old bent over Jones, as he stood before the wide entrance to the theater trying his best to induce passersby to lessen his stock of chewing gum, and increase the small stock of nickels which he carried in an old tobacco sack in his waistcoat pocket.

For two years, during the theatrical season, he had stood there. His gray beard had grown white: his clothing had grown more threadbare, and his shoes, patched by his own hand, had become almost unpatchable.

The regular patrons of the theater had come to look upon him as part and parcel of the handsome archway that led to the foyer, and his humble old figure seemed but a statue of meekness. No matter how stormy or cold the weather, Jones was always there. But he did not suffer much from the elements as he huddled up in his big coat behind his long beard, and great spectacles that looked like two round window panes. The wind and rain could not reach him in his nook behind a pillar.

Jones never affiliated with the hot tomale and weinerwurst man who flapped his stout arms to keep warm at the corner, nor with the hot chestnut man across the street. He seldom spoke, except to call attention to his wares. He never chewed tobacco nor smoked. He did not even use snuff.

It was getting along toward the close of the performance, and Jones was shifting his feet now and then to see whether they were really warm or only in the last stages of frostbite. A fine, silvery snow fell in glittering showers in the light of surrounding store windows.

A carriage drew up a few feet from Jones. The coachman was a dignified looking Scotchman in drab livery. He sat staring straight ahead for a few minutes. Then he turned his head slightly at the repeated phrase from Jones' lips. He whistled softly. Jones evidently did not hear. The coachman whistled a little louder. The old man looked up and seeing the aristocratic head jerk slightly took that for an invitation. Slowly and reluctantly Jones walked to the carriage, for he was not given to changing his place. It seemed to break one of his set rules. The coachman had by this time extracted a coin from his coat and Jones handed up a package of gum.

As Jones reached his hand up a look of amazement spread over the coachman's face. He quickly regained his composure, and sat up straight and rigid as before. He touched his finger to his hat in military salute. Then he said a strange thing:

"I am at your service, sir. I know the ring, sir!"

Jones raised his thin, red hand. It was not wrinkled. It was not dirty. On the small finger was a cameo ring, plain and seemingly of little value. He had picked it up nearly a year before on that very spot. With some of his hard-earned pennies he had paid for an advertisement in the "Lost and Found" columns of the daily newspapers, but the owner had not claimed it. He had worn it ever since.

"You know the owner, then?" queried Jones.

"You mean I know what it signifies—yes."

Jones saw at once that the ring did not belong to the man, but might belong to the person for whom he was waiting, so he asked, with a view to finding out the name of the possible owner:

"Waiting for some one?"

"For my mistress, Natalie," answered the coachman. "That is she," pointing to a large red poster on the theater's bulletin board, showing the figure of a woman outlined in black, a black mask entirely covering her face, with the words, "Natalie, famous African prima donna. Third annual tour," in green letters.

"Shall I wait for her, sir?" asked the coachman.

"Why, of course," answered Jones.

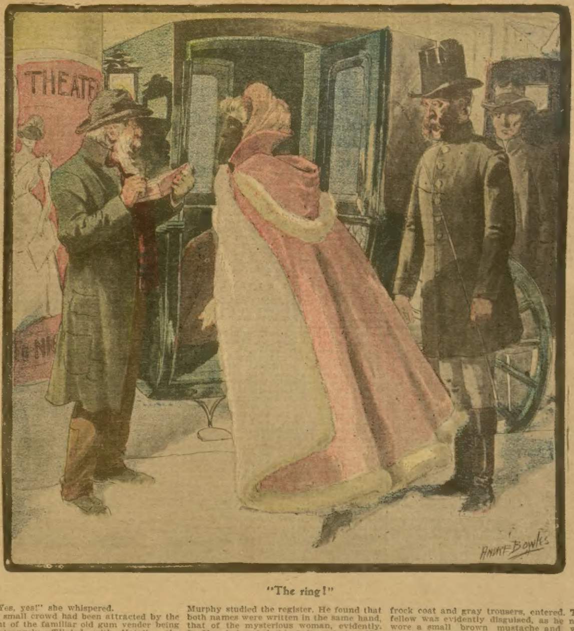
The home-going crowds were just beginning to clear away from the door, when a tall woman, slightly stooped, with a magnificent opera cloak of red enveloping her figure, stepped to the carriage. The coachman hastily descended from his box and opened the door. As he did so he whispered:

"The ring!"

The woman, who was heavily veiled, drew back with one foot upon the carriage step. She shrieked. Her facial expression could only be guessed at, for she wore a black mask.

"Here!" said the coachman.

He grasped old Jones' hand and held it up so the ring was plainly seen.



"The ring!"

"Yes, yes!" she whispered.

A small crowd had been attracted by the sight of the familiar old gum vender being so strangely affiliated with Natalie, the great mystery, whose phenomenal voice had thrilled the largest audiences of the season.

The woman half-pulled Jones into the carriage, the coachman closed the door, and drove rapidly away into the darkness.

A young man in a long ulster, who had noticed the incident, hastily ran to the corner and jumped into one of the cabs standing there, telling the driver to follow the carriage with the white and black horse. It was a long ride. Natalie's carriage stopped at a West end hotel. She engaged two suites of rooms, one for Patrick Jones, the other for herself. Then they entered the elevator, Jones having left his gum in the carriage, and were shown to their apartments.

They had hardly left the office when the young man in the ulster stepped in. He was smoking a cigar.

"How are you, Murphy?" said the clerk, with a cordial air. "What brings you out here, eh?"

Murphy nodded and smiled pleasantly as he examined the register.

"Send this up," he said, taking a card from his case, which read:

"Owen J. Murphy, Representing The Journal."

"No; send this."

He took a blank card from the hotel's stock and wrote upon it:

"Owen J. Murphy. (Must see you immediately.")

While waiting for the bellboy to return Murphy studied the register. He found that both names were written in the same hand, that of the mysterious woman, evidently. In Murphy's mind this indicated that Natalie had taken the old man in charge. Why?

For two years or more the papers had tried to solve the mystery of the woman in the black mask. That she had a magnificent voice and apparently much wealth there was no doubt, but where she came from was rather doubtful. Some said she was from Cape Town and others that she hailed from Johannesburg, but no one was sure. And why did she wear that mask? The bills said, "Famous African Prima Donna." Surely, she could not be a negress. If not, what was she like? Was she young and beautiful? Possibly she wore the mask that she might not be bothered with unwelcome suitors for her hand and fortune. Possibly she had committed some great crime and was afraid to show her face.

Altogether it was a charming mystery, and many wild stories had floated around the country regarding this woman. Murphy's keen perception had brought to light many interesting stories. He felt sure this old man had something to do with a mystery and he started in first to learn who the man was. He did not recognize him as the familiar gum man, although he knew he had seen the face before.

When the boy returned with the salver bearing his card he found written upon the back of it, "Wait in the Turkish parlor." Murphy ascended to the second floor and waited in the luxuriously appointed room.

Soon a man, whom he recognized as Natalie's coachman, but this time dressed in frock coat and gray trousers, entered. The fellow was evidently disguised, as he now wore a small brown mustache and was minus the burly side whiskers of the coachman.

"Mr. Murphy?"

"Yes."

"My name is McCammon. I represent Natalie. What can she do for you?"

"Sit down, McCammon," said Murphy.

McCammon, surprised at the audacity of this cool appearing young man, gingerly divided his coat tails and seated himself upon a red divan.

After McCammon had seated himself he maintained a very interrogative sort of silence, which indicated that Murphy must do the talking, while Murphy hardly knew how to begin. He felt that he must state some reason for calling upon Natalie. McCammon was growing impatient, and said:

"Pardon me, Mr. Murphy, but I will have to ask you to be brief, as I have an important engagement."

Murphy saw a chance for a snap shot.

"Yes; I know. With the old man," said he, as though he knew all about it.

McCammon started slightly, and Murphy noted with satisfaction that he became at once interested. He determined to make a bold play and find out if possible what Natalie wanted with the gum vender.

"Now, Mr. MacCammon, the way you hustled that old fellow into Natalie's carriage in front of the theater while officiating as coachman a short while ago, together with a few minor incidents immediately preceeding this act, is very suggestive of an abduction——"

"Sir!" McCammon had risen to his feet.

"That's what I said—an abduction, sir," continued Murphy. "Now, I want to know what you mean by bringing him here."

The Scotchman had good nerves, and his face gave not the slightest sign of what was passing in his mind. The charge of abduction had caused an expression of annoyance rather than of fear to come into his features. It was but momentary. He took a couple of cigars from his pocket, offered one to Murphy, who declined it, saying curtly that he smoked his own cigars. McCammon walked over to an easy chair, where he sat down and smoked a few seconds. Then he took a card from his case, wrote upon it, and pushed a bell button. He whispered to the boy who came in, and at the end of the sentence Murphy caught the words, "Hurry back." It was but a few minutes until the boy returned, handed McCammon his card, and left.

When McCammon had read the words on the card he spoke, and there was a twinkle in his eyes:

"Mr. Murphy, I at first did you the honor to think that you were not one of the ordinary young men who adopt all sorts of ruses to catch a glimpse of Natalie's features, and actually thought that your claim of an acquaintanceship with the old gum man upstairs was genuine. Since I find that it is not, I have only to say that our interview is at an end."

With these words he handed Murphy the card and walked from the room. The reporter was astonished at this turn of affairs, but he took the card and read it. On one side was written:

"Mr. Jones: Do you know a rather fresh young man named Murphy?"

On the other side was scrawled:

"The only Murphy I know is 60 years old."

Murphy re-read the card and laughed.

"Rather clever fellow, that McCammon," thought he. "Good way he took to settle the matter of my connection with this affair. But I've not done so badly after all. I've found out that the old man's name is Jones, and that he is the old gum man at the —— theater. Funny I did not recognize him. That the coachman is not always the coachman, that his name is McCammon, and that he is apparently high in Natalie's confidence. Now, the next question is, what do they want with Jones?"

Murphy lit a cigar and sat down to think the matter over. Just then he heard his name called in a feminine voice and Nona Dubrava, a dainty little soubrette whom Murphy had known from her childhood, came in.

"Good evening, Mr. Murphy, playing truant to your work, aren't you? Now, who would have expected to find you sitting in a hotel smoking at this time of the evening. I thought newspaper men were always working on some exciting story. It really takes all the romance out of your calling."

Murphy smiled as he took her hand in greeting.

"Well, Nona, reporters are not always on exciting stories, but as it happens I am on one this evening, and I am at my wits end. Now, if you were really the fairy that you look, you could help me out."

"Do tell me about it, Mr. Murphy. I should love to know a real good story before it comes out in the papers. Please," she coaxed.

Murphy hesitated. His professional instinct forbade talking about it to anyone not directly concerned. However, it could do no harm.

"I know so little about it myself, Nona, that I really don't know what I am trying to find out. But if I tell you this story you must promise me not to speak of it to anyone."

Her eyes opened wide in astonishment as he told of the apparent abduction of old Jones, and of the presence of the party in the hotel. She laughed as he related McCammon's dismissal of him a few minutes before her arrival, but grew more serious as Murphy's description of the mystery deepened.

"Where are they now?" asked the actress.

"Don't know where the party has congregated. Natalie has suite six and Jones has suite eight."

"Why, I'm in suite seven, myself," she exclaimed. "Gracious, I'm right between them. Don't be surprised if you hear of my being murdered tonight," she laughed, as she departed.

Murphy relit his cigar, which had gone out, and many schemes for obtaining another interview with McCammon or with Natalie were blown through the rings of smoke, only to be discarded as inadvisable. He was indeed at his wits ends.

His ears caught the rustle of silken skirts, and he looked toward the door. It was the soubrette.

"Owen Murphy, I am going to do you a favor," she said. "If I did not know you so well I would not do this. Those people are in suite eight. Suite seven and eight were apparently once connected, for the wardrobe in my bed chamber is built into the wall, and also opens into suite eight. You can hear every word they are saying from this wardrobe, and I am going to let you come in there and listen to them."

"Nona, you're a brick," exclaimed Murphy, delightedly. "I'll give you three columns of advertising matter this week in the shape of a Sunday story. Lead on."

In a short while Murphy was ensconced in the closet among a mass of dainty feminine wearing apparel, with the soubrette at his side. As she had said every word spoken in the next room could be plainly heard, and to his satisfaction the party were in the portion of the room where they could be seen through the rather large keyhole in the closet door.

Jones was seated in a chair, and his face wore an almost comical expression of bewilderment. McCammon and the woman in the mask were standing. The conversation had apparently gone on for some time before the reporter started to listen, and the result of it was seemingly little to their liking. Natalie's every movement indicated impatience, while McCammon was cool and suave. He was speaking:

"Now, Mr. Jones, it is useless to deny that you belong to the Society——"

"But, sir," broke in Jones.

"I know that you do. The ring proves it. You know as well as I do that there are only five of these rings in existence, and that the wearer of each of them has received the Great Benefit of the Society. Of course you will deny it—your oath binds you to do this—but you cannot expect me to believe that you picked it up. Why, it is the only way members have of identifying one another. Should one of these rings be lost the owner would never rest until it was found. Why, it is his very life. What would you do with the ring when the year of the Secret comes around?

"Ah, you do not answer. Now, Mr. Jones, I am not asking you to break any of your oaths. I do not want the secret, for I have that already. All I want is the name and address of the head of this society. I am satisfied that you know this, and can tell me if you will. We have money—plenty of it—and will pay you well for this information."

"Mr. McCammon, I do not know what you are talking about. Your words about my oath, the Society, the Great Benefit, and the year of the Secret have no meaning whatever to me. You say that the ring does not belong to either of you. You also say that the owner should value it very highly. Now, I picked this ring up on the sidewalk nearly a year ago and advertised for the owner. No one claimed it. Had you offered to buy it before you told me that it was so valuable to its owner, I would have let you have it for a very small amount of money. Now you cannot have it at any price, for I am going to keep it until the owner claims it. If he never does, I shall keep the ring myself."

"Of course you want to keep it," sneered McCammon, losing his temper, "for the ring belongs to you, and you are simply playing a smooth game to conceal the fact. But we know that we are right, Mr. Jones, and are willing to go to almost any length to obtain this information. We must have it."

"That's all right, sir. Do whatever you please, but it will do you no good. I am not going to give you something that does not belong to you, which you say would be of great value to its owner. I will try again to find him, and he shall have his ring."

Old Jones had grown excited in his turn and brought his hand down upon the table with a thump as he finished speaking. Murphy could hardly recognize in him the old gum man, for he exhibited none of the characteristics that might be expected. In his anger he had straightened up, his language was good and his pronunciation perfect.

"That old fellow must have seen better days," muttered Murphy.

There was dead silence in the room for a few seconds. The woman in the black mask paced the floor nervously. She suddenly stopped and turned toward McCammon. Again she hesitated, then spoke:

"Mr. McCammon, I must have the most powerful microscope that you can procure, and you will have to go down town to get it. You had better take a carriage and return as soon as you can."

It was evident that she wished to be alone with the old man.

McCammon bowed slightly and left the room. Then Natalie, turning to Jones, made a motion of her hand for him to be seated, and said:

"Sir, I wish to say something to you, and I hardly know how to begin. Perhaps when you have heard my story you will not judge me as harshly as I fear you do now. I have had great misfortune. One thing I cannot explain to you is why I wear this mask. Men have dogged my footsteps ever since I assumed it, seven years ago, when I made my debut in Paris as a singer. Alas, my misfortune has only added to the annoyance that the attentions of men give me. Some years ago I learned that somewhere in this country was a man (and I have reason to think he is in this city) who is possessed of a wondrous and strange power. It is said that he can by looking into mens eyes cause them to forget their identity and be subservient to his will. His power was so great, indeed, that he could, for instance, revive the dead, or——" she hesitated and sighed deeply, "make the old young. I also learned that this man had taken none but his dearest friends into the secret. He formed a society of five of them, and gave to each a ring, such a one as you now have upon your finger. One of the five heard me sing and like other men, seemed attracted to me by reason of the mystery supposed to lie behind the mask I wear. His attentions were not distasteful to me, but I could have no thought of anything but friendship for him. On the other hand, he proposed marriage. I rejected his offer as gently as I could. I did not see him again for a year, when I came to fill an engagement at the —— theater. I received a note from him saying he was dying at his hotel, and begging me to come to him. I did not have the heart to refuse. He was breathing his last when I arrived. Taking a ring from his finger he placed it in my hand and whispered: 'It is the most valuable thing in the world to me. Within this cameo is the name and address of a friend who has the power to revive the dead—to make the old young. I waited too long and he has now gone to Europe, else I would not be dying thus. I wish you to have my body placed in a sealed casket without embalming. When my friend returns, go to him, show him this ring and have him restore me to life, if such a thing be possible, as he says.' His head fell back and I knew he was dead.

"That night I went o the theater with a heavy heart, and sang but poorly. On my exit I recived a great shock. The ring was missing. Imagine my horror. I had no reason to doubt my friends sincerity, or the story of the wonderful power possessed by the man of whom he spoke. I determined to recover the ring if possible. Men employed by me searched everywhere. Then I came to the conclusion that it had been stolen from my dressing room. I secured the services of a famous detective to either recover the ring or find one of its counterparts. To him I gave a description of the cameo, which bore a queer sign representing a pair of eyes and a pair of hands. I have had the detective in my employ constantly since then. When he saw the ring on your hand tonight he recognized it. That is why you are here."

Clasping her hands, the singer sank to her knees and sobbed. With trembling voice she pleaded with Jones to allow her to examine the ring and gain the name and address of the strange man.

During the recital of this unusual story Jones sat motionless. His under jaw had dropped, and his forehead had puckered itself into a puzzle. But he drew the ring from his finger, and thrusting it hastily toward her, said, in a husky voice:

"Take it, take it! Several years passed between the time you lost your ring and the time I found this one, but it may be yours. At any rate you can have it long enough to learn what you wish."

She sprang up with a cry of joy.

"We will share the results together. You shall not regret what you have done. Wealth and youth shall be yours if my hopes are realized. Leave me now. Before day dawns I shall know all. Rest assured you shall share my fortune, whatever it is."

Jones adjusted his spectacles, which had fallen crookedwise on his nose, and stroking his gray beard dubiously left the room. When he had closed the door behind him, Natalie summoned her maid.

"Marie, fix that screen by this door. Put behind it the little table. Bring me your hand mirror."

"But, madam, you said that never, upon pain of losing my place, was I to——"

"Never mind. Bring it to me," said Natalie, gently.

The maid did as she was bidden, and when all was arranged Natalie was left alone.

Murphy turned a valise on end and sat down upon it. The screen had been placed in a semicircle around the very door behind which he watched. Natalie seated herself. In the roseate light of the lamp, which was surrounded by a deep red shade, Natalie's figure seemed to be that of a young woman. Yet the movements of her arms and the slight stoop of her shoulders were suggestive of a great weight, either of age, sorrow, or ill health. She was of commanding height, and had a beautiful figure. The mask entirely covered her face, and her neckwear was so arranged that not even a glimpse of the neck or cheek appeared. Murphy stared at the strange disguise in wonderment. He had noticed that her voice was clear and silvery, such as he had always associated with beauty. But what woman, if beautiful, would wish to screen that endowment of nature from sight?

For some time she sat in silence. Jones' ring lay upon the table before her, and Murphy could feel rather than see that her gaze was fixed intently upon the plain golden circlet with its shining black cameo. On the table, also, lay the maid's handglass, face downward. Now and then Natalie sighed deeply.

A ring at the bell startled her as if from a reverie. The door opened and the maid entered.

"Mr. McCammon," she announced.

Rising quickly, Natalie advanced to meet the detective, and took in her hands a large brass microscope he had brought.

"Please go now," she said. "But wait where Marie can find you when I send her."

McCammon and the girl withdrew together.

Placing the microscope beside the ring, Natalie picked up the small mirror and began to tremble as with excitement. She suddenly raised the shiny surface before her and at the same time tore away the blackmask, flinging it o the floor with disgust.

Murphy started. The face that he saw remained in his memory with vivid distinctness all the rest of his life. It was horrifying in its ugliness, which was so great that it gave the woman an unholy, demonical appearance. The feeling of revulsion that seized upon him was so great, indeed, that he felt like rushing from the closet and fleeing from its proximity. He had never imagined that its like could exist. Could it be the traces left by evil passions, or the use of some drug? It surely was not the disfigurement of age alone, although her face seemed old. It appeared like the face of a vengeful evil spirit, thwarted in its designs and tortured with jealousy and envy, which had brooded over its miseries until all hope of better things had fled.

As she gazed into the glass the woman seemed overwhelmed with anguish.

"Oh, why am I so ugly? What great sin have I committed that I should be so punished? Others have done worse than I, and yet they are not thus marked. Have I not given thousands of dollars in charity? Have not hundreds of people blessed me for good deeds done? And yet have they not all begged me to remove this hateful mask that they might behold my features? Ah, what if I had shown them?"

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Then violent anger took possession of her.

"Bah! I hate you!" she screamed at the reflection in the glass. "I hate you!" she repeated, vehemently, and raising the mirror above her head, dashed it to pieces on the floor. She sat silent for a full minute.

"And yet I was once beautiful," she resumed in a low voice, as if the mere recollection had softened her mood; "and young. Even yet I am not so old—but this awful face! If I dared look at it oftener I should go mad. And to think that I brought my own misfortune upon me!"

She picked up the ring and gazed at it.

"I am almost afraid to search for the spring which will give me the name I seek, yet should Henry Vale's words be true, this cameo holds the secret for which I have searched long years. Poor Henry Vale! Five years since he gave me that ring. He is past all aid now and cannot be benefited by the secret, but I can, and will."

A sudden determination seemed to have seized her. She pressed the ring on all sides. Then she discovered the spring and the cameo opened on a cunningly hidden hinge. She took a pin and picked a small white object from beneath where the cameo had rested. This proved to be a tightly folded piece of very thin paper. When unfolded it seemed covered with characters so finely written that they could not be read without the aid of the microscope.

Natalie bent over the scrap of paper intently, her lips moving as if repeating to herself what she read. Then with an exclamation of delight, followed by a sigh of relief she refolded the paper, replaced it carefully in the ring, and put the ring upon her finger.

"What women have longed for since the world was made I now almost possess—it is within my grasp. What is life without youth and beauty? For one day of my old existence—happy, admired and conscious of being able to exercise a woman's dearest pleasure—the power to control man's heart and actions—I would have given all the rest of my life. Now it is to be had for the asking, for is not the holder of this ring entitled to it? I feel that it is so. Ah, how much pain and misery may I escape if the experiment proves successful in my case. How gladly shall I walk in the free sunshine, unmasked to the world. No shame, no more degradation for me. No longer shall I hate the flowers because they are beautiful, and other women because they are fair. No longer will I feel that children would run from me in terror could they see the ugliness of my face."

Hastily masking herself the strangely affected woman rang for her maid. Murphy had been sitting in wonderment. The features of the unfortunate woman, at first so repulsive, had lost some of their ugliness with the emotions that shone as through a dark cloud during this soliloquy.

The maid entered the room and received instructions to show McCammon in. In a businesslike way Natalie took a check book from a drawer and wrote an order on her banker. Placing it in the detective's hand she thanked him in flattering terms for his services, which, as she had gained what she sought, would no longer be required unless the unforeseen should happen. She asked him to remain in the city for a few days so that in case she needed him again she could send for him. Then ordering the maid to call a carriage she left the room.

Murphy prepared to follow. Hastily cautioning the soubrette to say nothing of what had occurred, and promising to relate to her anything further he should learn, he went down to the street, hailed a cab, and the two vehicles were off at a lively rate. The first one stopped at a buff brick residence on a fashionable West end boulevard. Murphy alighted a block away and walked to the house, to which Natalie had just been admitted. Inquiring of a passing policeman he learned that it was the residence of a physician reputed to have great wealth and a very exclusive clientele. After a weary wait of an hour and a half Murphy was rewarded by seeing Natalie make her exit. The carriage and the cab traveled back to the hotel. Natalie went to her apartments. Murphy was burning with curiosity to know the result of the visit. He saw, however, that there was nothing to be gained in the way of information at the hotel that night, for it was then almost midnight. He jumped aboard a passing car

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Read the following, by William Cole, M. D., Washington, D. C., published in the United Investigating Reports regarding the prescription from which this remedy for curing Lost Manhood is prepared:

During the examination of men for the army during our recent war with Spain, our United States army physicians were shocked to find so large a percentage of men disqualified because of nervous disorders. It is not the purpose of these reports to enter into a statement of causes, other than to say that the sufferer is seldom to blame. His condition is indeed deplorable; his memory fails him, his energy gone, his eyesight dimmed, his muscles soft and his nervous stamina gone. He is pitied by those versed in nervous disorders and repelled by those of both sex who do not understand how dark the world is to him.

Some fifteen years ago the writer gave attention to the cure of nervous disorders, and found that the late Dr. Wilson, Professor of Chemistry and Practitioner of Medicine in Bellevue Medical College of New York, had a formula of wonderful power to restore to men the fullness of their physical and mental strength. In the year 1883 the celebrated Dr. Wilson died and his formula has been obtained by L. F. Page of 201 State street, Marshall, Michigan, who prepares it according to the original prescription, and from our analysis of the same, by our Board of Investigation, we find it composed of pure and fresh drugs, and that it is sold under the name of "Dr. Wilson's Restorative Remedies." Our investigation was extended into a great number of similar preparations, none of which were found equal to the above, while many were prepared by those who knew little or nothing about therapeutics or materia medica. We hereby caution the public against the use of all uncertain remedies and all who need nerve-life bringing medicine we recommend them to take Dr. Wilson's Restorative Remedies, prepared and sold by L. F. Page, 201 State street, Marshall, Michigan, and unto the aforesaid Dr. Willson's Restorative Remedies we extend the official endorsement of the United States Investigating Reports.

To every one who writes in good faith I will send the full formula of this wonderful medicine. This prescription and full directions are sent free. Have it filled, or if you desire, you can buy the remedies and prepare it privately just as well yourself. One prescription will make a new man of you. One dose will be enough to convince you of its marvelous power.

Among those whose attention has been attracted by this magnanimous offer is the Rev. J. S. B. Crawford of Waynsville, N. C., a very prominent divine, whose own vitality was seriously impaired. Being sick of paying money to quacks and charlatans who took his money without doing him any good, Mr. Crawford had the prescription made up and took it regularly, as he was directed. With this result, he was perfectly cured, and after several years of enjoyment of his newly given powers, made the statement publicly that every man in need of help should do likewise.

There are not many ministers who would be willing to publicly endorse and recommend a cure of this kind, with the statement that they themselves had been cured by it, but the Rev. Crawford has in him a great deal of true gratitude and love of mankind. This is shown in a recent leter in which he says that he makes public acknowledgment "in order that others may receive the same happy results."

You are older now and you can look back and see the mistakes you have made, but you cannot recall the vigor and fire of the springtime of robust manhood. Your transgressions have left their mark upon you. Your errors and excesses have ravaged your system and undermined your nerve force. Quickness, backache, nervousness and debilitating drains and worn-out, shrunken and lifeless organs are making your life a miserable existence devoid of pleasure. You hesitate and falter; you are not the man you once were, and you know it. Cast aside your modesty. This matter is too important. Act at once with manly decision.

This formula is printed and costs me almost nothing, and I give it free of any charge. I do not ask it, but if you desire to do so you can pay something after using it. I want to help every suffering man in America to regain his health and strength and the ability to enjoy the pleasures of life as I do. Address, L. F. Page, private box 999, Marshall, Mich.

◆

The Masked Singer.

(Continued.)

and went down town, determined to reurn early next day and learn what he could as to the result of the interview with the physician. He did not believe, as the woman apparently did, that such miracles as had been hinted at could be performed, and expected the whole affair would turn out to be a farce. In any event he would have a good newspaper story, for he had looked upon a face that had set the whole country to guessing what it was like. On the other hand, if it should be true—well, it would be the most remarkable thing that ever occurred. But he knew if he could not bring forward conclusive proof no one would believe the story.

He stationed himself at the hotel early the next day. Natalie again visited the buff brick residence, this time accompanied by Jones. After they left Murphy went boldly up the steps and rang the bell, determined to interview the physician.

He was received very pleasantly, but to his amazement when he stated the purpose of his call, the physician appeared very much surprised, and declared that Murphy was greatly mistaken. His actions also indicated that he thought the reporter was unbalanced mentally. Murphy was disgusted. He saw that if there was any truth in Natalie's story the urbane physician was not inclined to talk about it.

Each day Murphy watched the singer and the gum man enter the buff brick house, until a week had passed. Since the third day a change seemed to have taken place in old Jones. On the fifth day Murphy began to have some very serious doubts that the man who accompanied Natalie was Jones at all. His appearance had completely changed.

On the eighth day after the first visit to the physician came the announcement that on the following night Natalie would unmask at the theater.

There was a great rush early in the morning for tickets, and a constantly changing line of people stretched from the box office to the next corner, until it was announced that no more money would be taken, as not even standing room was left. Ticket brokers stood on the corner and did a rushing business, getting exorbitant prices for a single seat. The manager was happy. The police sergeant detailed several extra officers to handle the great crowd expected.

Early in the evening the house was jammed. Carriages containing theater goers from the most fashionable parts of town drove up to the entrance and gave up their occupants to the gaze of the eager crowd. A carriage finally stopped at the stage entrance and Natalie appeared, leaning upon the arm of a handsome young man, dressed in best style, who bore a vague, indistinct resemblance to Jones. As the singer crossed the sidewalk, veiled as usual, her step was light and joyous—her every movement expressive of grace. There was a babble of excited voices until she disappeared.

Inside the house a vast audience sat impatiently awaiting the appearance of the famous prima donna. A number of vaudeville specialties preceeded Natalie's appearance, and were received with very bad grace. The gallery least of all seemed tolerant of the usually popular black-faced comedians, the acrobats and dancers. Loud calls for Natalie were heard all over the house. In a box sat Murphy with a party of friends, including Nona Dubrava. Both were greatly excited, but trying hard not to show it.

At last Natalie swept onto the stage in a magnificent costume, still retaining her mask. Her bare arms were models of beauty and the fair shoulders gleamed like tinted marble in the light of the calcium. There was a deafening burst of applause, and when it finally subsided Natalie's wonderful voice, sweet and clear, could be heard. At the end of the first verse of the song she slowly raised her hand and unloosened the mask. It fell to the floor. The audience sat almost breathless an instant. Then a storm of applause arose that drowned the song.

It was a woman of surpassing beauty that stood revealed. Hundreds of opera glasses were trained upon the lovely features. Men arose in their seats and showered flowers and gold upon the stage.

Murphy gave a gasp of astonishment. Then he seized his hat and rushed from the box, muttering some excuse. Straight to the office he went as fast as he could.

The staid and dignified managing editor looked up in surprise as he bolted in unannounced and started breathlessly to relate the story. As it progressed the head of the great daily turned his chair around and gazed at Murphy in a puzzled and rather alarmed way. He did not grow enthusiastic as Murphy had often seen him do when an especially good story was brought in, but sat perfectly silent, with his glasses pushed back on his forehead, until the tale was finished. Then he slowly said:

"Murphy, my boy, I think you need a vacation. For the past two weeks I have noticed that you were not exactly yourself. I know that you worked very hard during the political fight we had a month ago, and its effects are showing on you. I think you are sick. You ought to run down in the country for a month or so and get your nerves together again."

Murphy saw the editor did not believe his story. He stood a moment, astonished and chagrined. Then he began to realize the utter hopelessness of an attempt to prove the truth of what he had related.

Next day he accepted the proffered vacation, and a month later he was himself wondering if he had been the victim of a bad dream, or if the events narrated here had actually occurred.

(The end.)

◆

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My success comes from strengthening the inside nerves. I bring back the power that operates the vital organs. Nerve power alone can overcome this weakness. I pity the sick one who lets prejudice keep him from getting my book.

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Mild cases, not chronic, are often cured by one or two bottles. At all druggists.

◆

The Tsar's Colored Servants.

The notorious sociability of the Tsar of Russia extends, we are told by a writer in Pearson's Magazine, to his servants, and he imitates the late Queen Victoria in having colored attendants One of these, James Hercules, hails from the West Indies, and is very anxious that no one should forget—not even his imperial master and mistress— that "he is a British subject" The faithful black fellow is a great favorite with the Tsar's children who frequently commandeer "Jimmy," as they call him, for participation in their nursery sports.

"You are not looking well today," his majesty will say to one of his body-servants "It pains me to see you like that. You had better take a rest." And, forthwith, the attendant in question is excused from duty and perhaps is given an extra money grant and an entire change of scene.

When at dinner a colored servant stands behind his majesty's chair. The dress of the Indian attendants varies from a simple costume —something like that worn by Queen Victoria's Hindoo retainers—to an elaborate state livery worn on ceremonial occasions They are given, fortnightly, alternate terms of duty, and are lodged, as are all the Tsar's male domestics, in a special building away from the palace.

◆

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I have just published a little book in regard to this blessed truth called "A Message of Health and Healing." If you write to me I will gladly send you a Copy Free. It gives many interesting facts and convincing testimonials. Enclose 2-cent stamp for postage. S. A. Jefferson, C. S. B., 401 Ft. Dearborn Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

◆

Be Your Own Weather Prophet.

Thunder on Sunday is considered by the weather wise the sign of the death of a great man; on Monday the death of a woman; on Tuesday, if in early summer, it foretells an abundance of grain; on Wednesday, warfare is threatened; on Thursdayy, an abundance of sheep and corn, the farmer may reckon upon; on Friday, some great man will be murdered; on Saturday, a general pestilence and great mortality.

Friday's weather shows what may be expected on the following Sunday, that is, if it rains on Friday noon then it will rain on Sunday, but if Friday be clear then Sunday will be fine as well.

The twelve days immediately following Christmas denote the weather for the coming twelve months, one day for a month. The day of the month the first snowstorm appears indicates the number of snowstorms the winter will bring. For example, the first snowstorm comes on November 29—look out then for twenty-nine snowstorms.

There is an old saying, which originated perhaps for the benefit of school children, that there is only one Saturday in the year without sun during some portion of the day.

A gale moderating at sunset will increase before midnight, but if it moderates after midnight the weather will improve.

No weather is ill
If the wind is still.

If the full moon shall rise red expect wind.

The sharper the blast the sooner 'tis past.

A light yellow sky at sunset predicts wind.

When you see northern lights you may expect cold weather.

Hazy weather is thought to prognosticate frost in winter, snow in spring, fair weather in summer, and rain in autumn.

Storms that clear in the night will be followed by a rainstorm.

Three foggy mornings will surely be followed by a rainstorm.

If the ice on the tree melts and runs off, rain will come next; while, if the wind cracks off the ice, snow follows.

When the leaves of trees show their under side there will be rain.

When the perfume of flowers or the odor of fruit is unusually noticed, rain may be expected.

When the sky is full of stars expect rain.

If a cat washes herself calmly and smoothly the weather will be fair. If she washes "against the grain" take your mackintosh with you. If she lies with her back to the fire, there will be a squall.

Cats with their tails up and hair apparently electrified indicate approaching wind.

If pigs are restless there will be windy weather; pigs can scent the wind.

The direction in which a loon flies in the morning will be the direction of the wind the next day.

Magpies flying three or four together and uttering harsh cries predict windy weather.

Flocks of crows signify a cold summer.

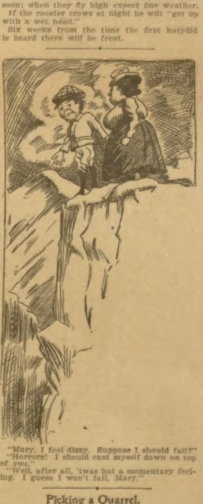
When the owl nests look out for a storm.

When the swallow flies low rain will come soon; when they fly high expect fine weather.

If the rooster crows at night he will "get up with a wet head."

Six weeks from the time the first katydid is heard there will be frost.

◆



"Mary, I feel dizzy. Suppose I should fall?"

"Horrors! I should cast myself down on top of you."

"Well, after all, 'twas but a momentary feeling. I guess I won't fall, Mary."

◆

Picking a Quarrel.

W. W. Jacobs, the author of "Many Cargoes," and other entertaining stories of the sea, gives in his new book "Light Freights," an interesting sketch of a typical ship's bully and his method of picking a fight. In the words of one of Mr. Jacob's sailors:

Bill came lurching down the ladder and Tom Baker put 'is 'and to 'im to steady 'im as he got to the bottom.

"Who are you putting your 'ands on?" ses Bill, glaring at 'im.

"Only 'olding you up, Bill," ses Tom, smiling.

"Oh," ses Bill.

He put 'is back up ag'in' a bunk and pulled hisself together.

"'Olding me up, was you?" he ses; "whaffor, if I might be so bold as to arsk?"

"I thought your foot 'ad slipped, Bill, old man," ses Tom; "but I'm sorry if it 'adn't."

Bill looks at 'im ag'in, 'ard.

"Sorry if my foot didn't slip?" he ses.

"You know what I mean, Bill," ses Tom, smiling a uneasy smile.

"Don't laugh at me!" roars Bill.

"I wasn't laughing, Bill, old pal," ses Tom.

"'E's called me a liar!" ses Bill, looking round at us; "called me a liar. 'Old my coat, Charlie, an' I'll split 'im in halves."

◆

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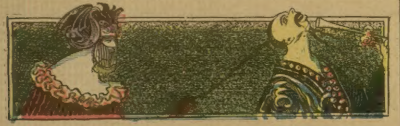

Saved From Pitiful Sin.

A Chain of Crime and a Chain of Golden Hair—Bonds of Steel and Links of Love.

By DR. DIXON DOUBLEDAY,

(Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.)

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CHAPTER VI.
DORAH.

With surly words of parting, Jules Dekay resumed his way homeward, the exultant, half-derisive voice of Kingley Taine still ringing in his ears.

Clapping his hand to the breast of the thick, heavy coat, which as may well be imagined hung on his attenuated figure loosely and uncouthly, the counterfeiter assured himself that his roll of spurious bills was safe; then, with long, rapid strides, he pressed onward over the rocky, devious pathway, muttering as he went forward:

"Kingley Taine knows all. He is not a man to stand much fooling, and I must do my best to bring Dorah to my way of thinking—or to his, rather; for I don't think he'll ever make her a good husband, even if she should consent to marry him. Right here's where the trouble lies. If she consents. But will she—can she—consent? He is not the right sort of a man to make her happy. But she's a good girl, Dorah is. She's always been dutiful and kind and considerate of my feelings and I haven't always been as good to her as I might have been; but I think she'd sacrifice her happiness, even, to save my life, if she knew that unless she did so, it must pay the penalty of my crime."

Increasing his already quite rapid rate of speed, he followed the well-worn path for half a mile further, and then it made a decided bend round to the right, and, leaving the ravine, wound round through a narrow strip of woodland and disappeared in the road a little beyond, and Dekay found himself staring with wide-eyed surprise at a notice written in a bold, coarse hand on a piece of paper and that was stuck up on a large tree close by the wayside.

It was the same, word for word, that Taine pointed out to Gary a little later, as recorded at the close of the last chapter.

The counterfeiter read it through, with a scared look on his rum-pinched face, and in his watery eyes, and gave utterance to a quick cry of dismay as he saw the name signed to the bottom.

"Lucifer!" he half gasped. "Mainstone, the Man-Hunter! Then he is on our track. When he makes up his mind to accomplish anything he is as sure to do it as fate itself."

The counterfeiter stood for a moment, silent, almost motionless, his eyes fixed wildly on the notice before him. Then he went on:

"Taine knows our secret. He has it in his power to give us up to the Vigilantes. If he should do so, they would hang us; and I know him well enough to know that his is no idle threat; he will do as he says. But even if I buy his silence, have I any assurance that this human sleuth-hound will not hunt us down? A word, a breath, even, is enough to set Mainstone, the Man-Hunter, on the right track. He is a human hound, as keen of scent and as untiring as the brute he so much resembles. If he ever suspects us we are lost. He follows up a bare suspicion as most men follow up a certainty. Once on our track, he will hunt us to death."

Dekay started on toward home, reeling like one drunk, so nervous was he from apprehension.

"For five hundred dollars reward," he muttered, "almost every man along the frontier will be on the lookout for us. We shall have to look out for every one of them. There is no way but to hurry this job through and get the notes in circulation as soon as possible, and then we'll have to go slow—probably stop work altogether till this excitement dies down a little."

In half an hour he was crossing the little cleared patch of ground that surrounded his cabin, within which Dorah was awaiting his return.

It was a cabin of logs, rude and rough in structure, built after the primitive style of our forefathers, but a pretty, home-like place withal; and thick, tangled masses of morning-glory vines trailing gracefully over the doorway and round the small windows at either side of it, with a flood of mellow moonlight over all, rendered it doubly picturesque.

Jules Dekay had not trained these vines. He had other things to think of and he was scarcely the man to think of such things. It was Dorah's work. Nor did the evidences of her refinement and care stop there. In front of the cabin, on either side of the narrow footpath which ended at the door, were several little beds of lilies and peonies and heliotropes, interspersed here and there with rose bushes and lilacs which made the place really a beauty spot in the wilderness.

Dekay half paused as he drew near the door and cast a hasty glance about him.

"What a tasty little thing Dorah is, to be sure," he thought. "Who but she would ever have made such a wild place look like this? She's too pure and gentle for Taine. Kingley Taine can't make her happy. She loathes and detests him and almost shudders at his evil character. Her life with him would be almost a living death. But if she does not consent to it—if she will not do so to save me, then——"

He stopped short here and the words that Taine had spoken that night seemed to ring again in his ears, causing a half shudder to convulse his frame.

"Then you hang."

"Yes," he said, almost under his breath. "If she will not save me by becoming the wife of Kingley Taine, he will expose me and I shall hang for it."

Opening the door quickly as he said this, he passed inside, his hand still concealed by his heavy coat, gripping the bundle of forged notes.

One who had noticed the marks of womanly refinement and culture before the door, would not be disappointed by the appearance of the interior. Every article of furniture in the little room, though rude and homely in its construction, was remarkable for the scrupulous neatness and manifest good taste in its arrangement. A small, neatly spread table was set in the center of the apartment, and upon it was arranged a simple though inviting supper, at sight of which the eyes of the hungry and weary counterfeiter lighted up with a look of grateful anticipation.

His bosom was the theater of contending emotions, and as he entered he tried to calm himself but succeeded only partially.

There was a glad light in Dorah's blue eyes as she stepped forward to meet him, and saw that he had done tonight what he had not done before for weeks—come home sober.

She was slender of figure and slightly below the medium height, with wavy, golden brown hair and sunny, azure eyes that just now flashed a world of welcome to the besotted man whom, with all his faults, she revered as a father, with all her true, tender, womanly heart.

"You are late tonight, father," she said, in a low voice; and Jules Dekay read her heart aright when he ascribed the cause of the happy light in her blue eyes to her joy at seeing him sober.

"Yes, business kept me longer than usual," he replied, scarcely daring to look her frankly in the face as he thought of the criminal nature of the work that had detained him.

"I have had your supper ready for two hours, at least," she went on with a smile, "but I trust it hasn't spoiled—if it has, it isn't my fault."

Dekay forced a laugh that was not half a laugh, it was so weak and so unnatural, and there was so little real hearty gayety in it.

"I feel as though I could spoil it," he said, as he took off his coat, as was his usual custom on coming in, and after assuring himself that the roll of counterfeit notes was still safe, he threw it across a chair at one side of the room. "I'm as hungry as a bear."

Drawing a seat up to one side of the table, he sat down and was soon enjoying a hearty and much-needed meal; for it was now long after midnight, and he had not tasted food since dinner, and besides feeling half-famished, he felt the need of his accustomed stimulants, from taking which he had abstained all day, in view of the work that was before him.

Dorah poured out a steaming cup of tea and sat it before him, then drawing apart, sat down on a rustic sofa at one side of the room. This sofa was not one of your modern affairs, but the bona fide pioneer article, so uncompromisingly primitive that it is doubtful if the reader ever looked upon its like. She sat there unnoticed by Dekay, apparently engrossed in intense thought, and was aroused suddenly out of her abstracted mood by his quickly spoken request for tea, when he had nearly finished his repast. She arose with alacrity, and while he emptied the cup and set it down by the side of his plate.

He arose at last, and without looking at her, went across the room, and half-reclined on the rude though comfortable sofa before spoken of, supporting his head on his hand, and appeared to be deeply buried in meditation.

Dorah, wondering greatly what had come over her father, cleared away the remnants of his supper, washed the dishes and put them in their places and made a few simple preparations for the next morning, trilling an old song as she worked, and then going up to him, put a small hand on either side of his chin, and, in a half-caressing way, raised his face till his eyes met hers for the first time that night.

"What troubles you, father?" she asked. "Tell me, wont you?"

For several minutes he did not answer. She had allowed him to take his chin from between her hands, and he sat up straight, but with bowed head and downcast eyes.

When at length he looked up, Dorah was startled by the pallor of his face and the wild look of pain that it bore. In all the years since her babyhood, she had seen him in many moods, but never before had she beheld him thus.

"Tell me, father, what troubles you?" she urged.

"You have always been a dutiful child to me, Dorah," he said, in a broken voice.

Then he felt the gentle touch of her hand on his head.

"I have always tried to be, father. Perhaps I have not done as well as I might have done, but I am sure that I have always meant to do as near right as I could. I don't believe you have had much cause to complain of me and I have not heard you complain; you have always been very kind to me."

"Yes, Dorah," he said, earnestly, "you have been to me a better child than I have deserved—a better daughter than most good girls would have been. You have done more for me and borne with me more patiently than most girls would have done for a father living such a life as mine has been."

"Don't speak so, father. I have done no more than my duty."

"And now I am going to ask a sacrifice of you, Dorah," he said, slowly.

She did not speak, but looked at him inquiringly, as if trying to read in his face the meaning of his unexplained words.

"And such a sacrifice it is!" he went on.

"I would do almost anything for you, father—anything that I could do to make you happier."

He came to the point at once. He had not meant to do it so soon, but he was excited. He was too abrupt, and he knew it as soon as his words had left his lips.

"Could you marry Kingley Taine?"

A blow in the face could scarcely have startled her more. She fairly staggered; then, leaning on a chair, her breath coming and going in gasps, she repeated the words after him in the manner of one bewildered.

"Could I marry Kingley Taine?"

He answered her only with a nod.

"He has several times asked me that question for himself and you have favored him and pressed his claim, and I have always answered you both—No!"

CHAPTER VII.
"A PRICE HAS BEEN SET ON MY HEAD."

Dorah Dekay was standing up firmly and proudly before her father, her blue eyes flashing with a stern resolve; and he could not repress a feeling of pride as he noticed how pretty she looked, with her flushed face and determined manner.

"I will never marry Kingley Taine. I would rather die!"

He had meant to be careful and not to say anything to alarm her, but his intense excitement got the better of him again, and he almost yelled:

"Then I hang! Then I hang!"

She was too much startled at his strange words and wild manner to say anything just then; but he saw the questioning look in her face, and hastened to add, more calmly:

"Don't be alarmed, little one. I spoke before I thought. But a great trouble has come upon me—or, rather, I have brought it upon myself and my very life is in danger. Sit down here and let me tell you about it."

He drew her to a seat beside him, and while she tried to say something to cheer him a little, sat quite still and silent for two or three minutes; then, when he thought how little words could avail him now, he checked her with an impatient wave of the hand, saying slowly, and without looking her squarely in the face:

"You have heard of the gang of counterfeiters that are said to have their place of concealment somewhere in this vicinity?"

Her face lighted up at this as though something had been brought to her mind that she had forgotten. Springing up, she crossed to the shelf above the fireplace and returned bearing a piece of paper in her hand.

"A man left this here today," she said, simply. "I did not think of it until you spoke of the counterfeiters, just now."

Taking it in his fingers, he saw that it was the same notice that he had read a little while before, and he shivered as he crushed it in his hand and dropped it to the floor.

"Did you know the man?" he asked, after a minute.

"No; I don't think I ever saw him before."

"How did he look?" he questioned, eagerly.

"There was nothing strange about his appearance, I think, nothing that would attract attention to him more than to anyone else. He was of medium size with light hair and eyes, the latter a very light blue, and I thought very sharp and piercing for such a color. His beard was quite heavy, and though not red was of a sandy hue. He was dressed in dark colored clothes and wore a broad-brimmed, black slouch hat, and carried a rifle."

"I don't think I know him," said Dekay, but a quick, violent start a moment before, while she was speaking, had given the lie to his words.

"It must have been Mainstone, the Man-Hunter," he thought. "He has light hair and his eyes are like those described by Dorah—very light blue and very sharp and piercing for such a color—that expresses it exactly. As for his dress, that is neither here nor there, for his disguises are numerous and various. I wonder if he suspects me—but it can't be."

"Did he say anything much that you remember?" he asked, "anything that impressed itself on your mind?"

"No; he didn't talk much; he was here but a few minutes. I remember that he said that the counterfeiters would surely be caught at last; the Vigilantes are after them, and I gathered from his words that they are resolved to make short work of it when they discover who the counterfeiters are. That is about all, only he wanted me to have you see the notice and thought that you would consider the reward offered incentive enough to lead you to try to ferret out the secret of the counterfeiters."

"Then he didn't ask any questions?" persisted Dekay, eagerly.

"Only who lived here and where you had gone; and when I told him your name and answered that you were absent for the day only, and would return for the night, he wanted me to be sure and show you the notice and tell you the reward would be paid promptly to any man that would give the Vigilantes any information that would lead to the apprehension of the counterfeiters. That is all. I presume many men hereabouts will be on the lookout for them. Perhaps you may be the man who is so fortunate as to secure the reward—who knows?"

She was almost frightened at the deadly look that came into his face as she ceased speaking. He was as pale as a corpse and his eyes almost started out of their sockets.

"I—I—receive the reward?" he quavered.

"Why not, father?" she said. "Your chance is as good as anybody else's. I am sure it's every man's duty to do what he can to aid in ridding the country of such a bad set of men."

"Dorah!"

His voice was sharp and loud and the name issued from his lips like a cry of pain.

She went up to him and laid her hand on his shoulder, and, with a look in her sunny blue eyes half of fright and half of pity, she said:

"What is it, father? Did I say anything to displease you? Tell me about it."

Half tottering to his feet he folded her in his arms and Dorah was sorely puzzled at his strange behavior.

"Dorah," he said, "you wont loathe and despise me for what I am going to tell you, will you? You are too good and too pure to be my child—you are not——"

"Don't say that, father," she interrupted, with a smile up into his haggard, pallid face. "I can never think of you except to honor you. What is the meaning of your strange words?"

"I am one of those counterfeiters, Dorah," he said. "A price has been set on my head."

In her amazement and sudden excitement she tore herself free from his encircling arms and faced him with a white face and staring eyes.

"You—you!" she said, faintly. "What do I hear? Am I dreaming? What does all this mean?"

"Don't!" he said, "don't look at me so! Don't scorn me for what I have done. It was for your sake as well as mine. I intended to stop by and by, when I had made a little more money, and leave this place forever. Then I thought we could live better and happier than we had lived here."

Dekay gave utterance to a half smothered sigh and continued:

"But I shall be discovered; my plans are failing. Influenced by the reward offered by the Vigilantes, men will soon be hunting me down like a beast of prey. I have always tried to keep you from learning of the business I have been in and of the awful chances I have been taking; but concealment is no longer possible; my risk is now greater than ever, and—Dorah, my child, you alone can save me!"

She staggered back a step or two and would have fallen had he not caught her in his arms. When he had laid her down on the rustic sofa he saw that she was unconscious.

When he had restored her to consciousness and she was able to sit up again, he told her of his meeting with Kingley Taine that night and of the power of the latter to deliver him up to an ignominious death. When he had told her all, he asked:

"Will you save me, Dorah?"

"To save your life," she answered. "I will become the wife of Kingley Taine, but I wish that I could die instead."

CHAPTER VIII.
MAINSTONE, THE MAN-HUNTER.

"You know what that means, Tom Gary," said Taine, when the counterfeiter had read the notice to the end. "You have heard of Mainstone, the Man-Hunter?"

"Yes," answered Gary, remembering the things he had heard of this same man, "curse him. I've heard enough about him and that infernal keen head of his to fill a big book. If he suspects us, we're lost, as sure as fate."

The fame of Oscar Mainstone, of Mainstone, the Man-Hunter, as he was called, was as well known along the border as that of the Vigilantes themselves.

For more than a year it had been a terror to evil-doers and the simple mention of it was enough to send a thrill through the heart of any man whose business was not open to the inspection of the settlers at large.

A year previous to the time of our story, the country had been infested by regularly organized bands of horse thieves and marauders, such reckless characters as invariably follow in the wake of civilization as it takes its first step toward opening up a new region.

At first the settlers were powerless to resist their depredations and all attempts on their part to keep and defend their property were uniformly unavailing. But such a state of things could not last always. When Mainstone came among them and organized a band of Vigilantes, brave and true men, ten in number, they set to work under his leadership, hunting down the robbers and meting out to them such summary and terrible justice as their dastardly crimes merited, and these stern bordermen knew so well how to dispense, and a change in the aspect of affairs became apparent.

Such of the marauders as escaped the common fate of all that fell into the hands of the Vigilantes—death by hanging to the nearest tree—fled the vicinity, going away, doubtless, to ply their nefarious avocation elsewhere.

The Vigilantes had freed the country of horsethieves, murderers and desperadoes to a great extent, and now regarded their work as nearly ended. But they resolved, in the absence of civil and executive authority, to inaugurate a judiciary of the settlers where all offenders should have the privilege of trial by judge and jury. Though regular legal authority was wanting, the settlers had resolved to preserve its power and enforce its ordinances and very earnestly, very stubbornly, were they carrying out that resolve.

The redoubtable man-hunter was a detective in the employ of the government, and after he had, by his decision and daring action, led the Vigilantes successfully through their desperate enterprise, breaking up the powerful gangs of cut-throats and thieving desperadoes that had infested the country, he was called away to other work, leaving them to maintain the comparative social order they had gained.

And in this respect they had succeeded beyond their most sanguine anticipations; never failing to ferret out any crime that was committed and bring its perpetrators to speedy justice, until they became aware that a gang of counterfeiters was at work in their very midst, and all endeavors on their part to discover the identity of its members or find the place of its unlawful business had proven futile.

Thus matters had gone on for some time, three months having elapsed since the Vigilantes were first surprised of the existence of the forgers and at last, despairing of ever hunting them down unaided, they had sent for Mainstone, the Man-Hunter, to assist them in searching them out and bringing them to justice.

"So you are sure, quite sure, you know who is after you?" went on Taine, as Gary stood almost trembling before him.

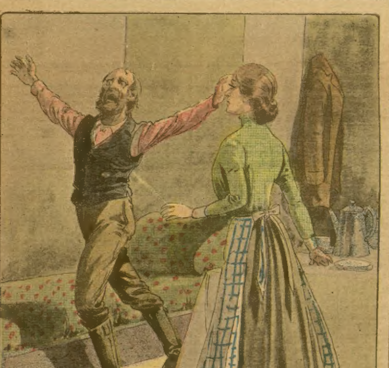
The counterfeiter nodded assent.

"Then you know you're going to get fetched up, if you don't go pretty slow? You know Mainstone, the Man-Hunter, don't stop until he gets done."

"Yes."

"And just one word from me would put him on the right track at once. If left to himself, perhaps he wouldn't find you out for a month."

"Yes; if we could be safe for a week, we could finish up these bills and get them into circulation," said Gary. "Then we could get out of the way and snap our fingers at the Vigilantes, and, better still, at Mainstone, the Man-Hunter."



"A price has been set upon my head!"

"If I tell them what I know," said Taine, as if he was discussing the most rivial matter of business, "I can get five hundred dollars for my trouble, but if I keep still and let you finish up this little job of yours, what then?"

"I will double it," said Gary, quickly.

"You mean you'll make it a thousand?" said Taine, watching him narrowly.

"Yes; I'll give you twice as much to keep your mouth shut as they will if you blow on us."

Taine had the advantage, and he was not slow to use it. He laughed again, that low, derisive laugh of his, and said, jeeringly:

"You value your life highly, don't you? One thousand dollars, indeed! Make it two thousand, and you live."

"Two thousand," repeated the counterfeiter, with a pallid look on his face. "It's impossible—I can't raise it!"

"Then you can die!" was the stern rejoinder.

For two or three minutes Gary stood as motionless as a graven image, and Taine, watching him keenly, read by the varying expressions of his changeful face that in his heart fear and cupidity were struggling for the mastery. He knew that cowardice would triumph in the end, and he leaned carelessly against the pine stub, and stroking his heavy mustache, patiently awaiting the certain issue.

But he kept his keen eyes fixed immovably on the counterfeiter's face, and as the minutes passed, he noticed that the look of mingled fear and cupidity had given place to an expression of crafty cunning.

He knew as well as if Gary had declared his purpose now, that he was perfecting a half-formed plan to defeat him; and while he still maintained his easy posture, and kept on nonchalantly caressing his bristling mustache, as though treachery was the very last thing he was thinking of, he dropped his left hand, and, holding his revolver behind him partially, he was prepared to meet it whenever it should manifest itself in the actions of the counterfeiter.

But he soon realized that he would have no immediate use for the weapon, as it was evident that Gary did not intend any violence; the rascal had not the hardihood to attempt anything of the kind, and besides he had been disarmed.

For a time there was silence between them.

"Well," asked Taine at length, "what are you going to do?"

"The best I can. There's only one way—I'll give you the money."

"I thought so," remarked Taine, not without a suspicion that there was something behind the counterfeiter's apparent acquiescence. "It's your best plan."

For a moment Gary did not speak. He appeared to be thinking. Was he plotting yet?

Taine thought so.

"I tell you, Gary, it's better than hanging," he added, raspingly and with a searching glance into the other's face. "A thousand dollars is quite a sum of money, considered abstractly, but when a man compares it with the value of his life, you know it dwindles down almost to nothing. And a man who actually manufactures money can afford to lose a little now and then. About everything he takes in is clear profit and"—punching Gary playfully with a finger—"it don't cost you much to advertise your enterprise, eh?"

Gary did not appear to relish this little joke particularly, or if he did his face did not betray his pleasure.

"Never mind your sickening gags," he growled. "I promised you the cash and you're going to get it."

"Correct," exclaimed Taine, with a leer that disclosed half a dozen scraggy yellow teeth with a wide gap in the middle of the row, where a couple had been knocked out. "You're talking business now, but you do not state when you intend to dish up the ready dough."

"Now, if you want it."

Kingley Taine looked at Gary sharply.

"No time like the present," he said; "but where is it? Have you got it with you?"

"No; but it's in the house. Shall I go and get it?"

"Not quite yet. Wait—I want to talk more with you."

"Well!" Gary was getting impatient. "Harney Barmore will think I ain't coming back tonight."

"It's about him that I want to talk—him and Jules Dekay. Listen, a minute to what I've got o say."

"Go on—I've been here long enough."

"Don't get impatient and indulge in foolish talk," was Taine's cool admonition. "It isn't twenty minutes since we left the house. The more haste the less speed, you know—and we're trying to work up a sure transaction, I take it. This is what I want to tell you. Don't you inform Harney Barmore or Jules Dekay that I know anything about this little enterprise of yours—don't tell them you saw me tonight. That must be in the bargain, and if you don't keep the strictest faith with me you'll know what to expect from me. If you mention the matter to them, I shall find it out—so be careful. Do you promise silence?"

"Yes, I promise," answered Gary. "Shall I go in after the money now?"

"Yes; and see that it's the genuine stuff. You can't fool me on money—I've handled too much of it in my time for that. I've grafted with circuses in every part of the country and I used to be a gay and glorious boss gambler—and it ain't past my record to make and lose thousands in an hour; that was at the faro game; I made, mostly, at that game—used to scoop 'em all!" he added, as his eyes brightened at the memory of the exciting times when he had lived by the gamester's arts. "In those days, Kingley Taine could show as big a roll of the filthy paper and as good a bagful of the cussed coin as the best man in Orleans, and when it came to a fight, the same Kingsley Taine could command every peeler in the city; but times are changed."

After Taine ceased speaking, he stood for a moment with bowed head, thinking, his hands folded across his broad chest, one of them still clutching the revolver.

Tom Gary had turned toward the old log tavern and was walking slowly toward its door; but he had taken only a few steps when he was halted by a sharp command from Taine.

"Stop!"

"Well, what now?" Gary asked, gruffly.

"I am going with you as far as the door."

"Gary had evidently not calculated on this, but he submitted, though with an ill grace.

"All right—come on, only don't keep me waiting any longer, or Harney 'll think I've cut stick."

So saying, he turned his back on the old pine stub and walked right up to the cabin door, Taine following him closely, with his revolver ready for use.

CHAPTER IX.

HUSH-MONEY AND A LOCKET.

As Taine and Gary turned away there was a strange, deadened, grating sound that, had they not been so engrossed, must have attracted their attention, for it proceeded from the interior of the old pine stub.

As the two reached the cabin door, the figure of a very lank and bony man began to emerge from an opening in the stub at the side opposite to the place where they had been standing a minute before. When he stood up it appeared that his clothes, which were covered with dust and fragments of rotten wood, were odd and uncouth in style.

His coat was of some dark cloth, a very long swallow-tailed affair, which gleamed up and down the front with large brass buttons. His trousers, very small as to the legs, were checked with large black and brick-colored plaids and were tucked into the tops of a pair of massive boots, which extended nearly to his knees. His head was surmounted by a skull cap that, taken with the rest, made him look with his small head and long legs, as much like a pair of enormous tongs, as it is possible for a human being to appear.

The fellow's face was thin and yellow and its expression was decidedly cadaverous; his mouth was wide and his teeth large and irregular; his hair was a light corn color, and his big eyes were blue like bird's eggs. He was a typical country bumpkin, and when he spoke it was in a high pitched nasal voice:

"The air is full of deviltry tonight, I'll be sworn—fan me with yer boot, if it ain't. Here goes to see what follers."

Reaching through the aperture in the old pine stub, he drew forth an ancient shotgun that had evidently seen all kinds of service, and disappeared in the shrubbery near the old log tavern.

Was this man the gawk he appeared to be, or was he playing a part? Was he a confederate of the counterfeiters, or was he a spy upon them? However, his future actions were to answer these questions, certain it was that now he was watching Taine and Gary intently.

As the two stood at the door of the cabin, Taine laid his hand on the counterfeiter's arm and hissed these words in his ear:

"I'll give you just ten minutes and no more to get the money and bring it here. If you try to go back on your promise in any way, or if you ain't here with the money in your hand when the time is up, Mainstone, the Man-Hunter, and the Vigilantes will be down on you before daylight. Understand?"

The counterfeiter nodded and laid his hand on the door handle. The sharp, metallic click of the latch and the hissing voice of Kingley Taine struck his ear at the same instant.

"Mind! No treachery now! I shall be on my guard!"

The next moment Gary had passed inside the door and Taine stepped in after him, and after the counterfeiter went to the rear and Taine stood alone in the front part he heard again the harsh, guttural breathing of the drunken hag in the corner, varied once or twice by maudlin mutterings as she turned uneasily from side to side.

Taking up the candle, which occupied its old place on the chair near the entrance, he crossed the room noiselessly and bent over the recumbent, uncouth form of old Electa Wink, and flashing the light in her face, he saw that it was angular and haggard and sunken at the jaws, while her discolored, fang-like scrags, set at intervals of a half inch or more along her red gums, showed beween her tightly drawn lips, through which her offensive, gin-laden breath issued in short, irregular gasps; and her thin, straggling locks of iron-gray framing in the whole, made it anything but a pretty picture to look upon.

Her old dress, dirty and almost glazed with the accumulation of dirt and grease of months, was unfastened at the top; and, lying on her dirty and flabby bosom, he saw a small gold locket secured to her neck by a slender, braided cord of golden hair.

In a moment he had raised her head and slipped the cord off, and letting her head fall back on the hard floor with a thump that had the effect of arousing her from her maudlin sleep, he held the locket up with a trembling hand, while the other had scarce the nerve to hold the candle whose light disclosed to his staring gaze the face of a woman in the first flush of maturity—a lovely face, with blue eyes and masses of long, beautiful, golden hair, the same in hue as that of which the yellow cord was made, which he held in his fingers caressingly, looking first at it and then at the matted hair of the hag.

The wretched woman had raised herself up, and, supporting a part of her weight on her elbow, was regarding him with a stupid stare; and he could see that the hair that had been braided into the cord had never graced the head of Electa Wink, and that the pictured face in the locket was as unlike hers as it was possible for a human face to be, except that its complexion had been something like what old Electa's had been, seemingly, before it had been marked by the ravages of years and strong drink.

"It is the picture of Madge Montour. If the old hag ever told Gary it was a picture of herself when she was young she lied, for no one but Madge Montour ever looked like this."

Still holding the locket suspended by the cord of braided hair, he fixed his eyes steadily on those of old Electa Wink as she sat up staring him vacantly in the face. He was possessed of a strange mesmeric power, the power of a strong will over a weak one.

"I am going to question you," he said, in a whisper, not wishing the sound of his voice to reach the ears of the two men in the other apartment, "and you will answer truthfully."

This was not a request; it was rather a command, and the old woman seemed to recognize its authority, and her eyes, no longer looking into his, seemed to be staring blankly at nothing in particular.

"Yes," she replied, sleepily.

"And you will not talk loud," he went on. "You will answer in whispers." Then he held the locket up before her. "Whose portrait is that?"

When she spoke her cracked tones formed themselves into a half inarticulate rattle, but he distinguished her words without much difficulty.

"Madge!"

"Ah, old woman, you can tell the truth if you have to do it," he muttered. "Now, what is her last name?"

"I don't know."

"I can tell you—it is Montour, and this is the picture of Madge Montour."

"I don't know," she rattled, weakly; "Madge is all I know."

"Where is she now?"

"In the——"

Her voice died away in a gasp.

"Go on," commanded Kingley Taine, still keeping his eyes fixed on hers, his every action and every expression of his dark face betokening an interest eager and intense. "She is in the——"

"Yes, sir; in the—— She was—in—the—"

The creature's physical powers were failing fast, and, growing weaker and weaker, she rocked to and fro and almost sank to the floor.

"Sit up straight," said Taine.

With an apparent effort, she attempted to steady herself in a more stable posture, and Taine would have spoken again had he not heard the sound made by the opening of the door of the rear room.

Hiding the locket in a convenient pocket, Taine dropped the candle to the floor, where its light flickered a moment spasmodically and then went out altogether.

Then, springing to his feet, he stepped to the center of the room and there met Gary, who held something tightly in his right hand; and at the moment the two confronted each other a third man entered the cabin by the outside door.

"Here's your hush money, Taine," said Gary, laughing, and extending his hand with whatever it grasped.

"More than you bargained for, I reckon!" Taine heard Harney Barmore say, as a ball from a revolver, fired from behind him, grazed his cheek.

"Here's your change, then," he replied, coolly, and he fired and Barmore fell headlong to the floor.

This strong and highly dramatic story will be continued next week. Any one subscribing to the Ledger is entitled to a free camera or free patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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I have discovered a positive cure for all female diseases and the piles. It never fails to cure any of the various diseases peculiar to women, such as leucorrhœa, displacements, ulceration, granulation, etc., or the piles from any cause or either sex. I will gladly mail a box of this wonderful medicine free to every sufferer. Mrs. C. B. Miller, Box 108, Kokomo, Ind

Nose Indicates Character.

"A large nose is always an unfailing sign of a decided character," writes Blanche W. Fischer in an article in the Ladies' Home Journal. "It belongs to the man of action, quick to see and to seize opportunity. A small nose indicates a passive nature, one less apt to act, although he may feel as deeply. He will have many theories, while the possessor of a large nose will have deeds to show. Persons with small noses are most loving and sympathizing, but their friendship is not the active kind.

"A nose with the tip slightly tilted is the sign of the heartless flirt. A long nose shows dignity and repose. A short nose, pugnacity and a love of gayety. An arched nose—one projecting at the bridge—shows thought. A straight nose shows an inclination toward serious subjects. A nose that turns up slightly indicates eloquence, wit and imagination. If turned up much it shows egotism and love of luxury. A nose that slopes out directly from the forehead, that shows no indenting between the eyes, indicates power. If the nose is indented deeply at the root the subect will be weak and vacillating. A nose that turns down signifies that the possessor is miserly and sarcastic.

Exchange of Discourtesies.

Miss Caustique—Some men are so stupid.

Mr. Pepper—Yes; it's lucky, ain't it? It makes some women seem so bright by comparison.

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Marriage broadens some men and flattens others.

If a woman's waist is shaped like an hourglass the sands of life soon run out.

Blessed is the peacemaker—to the man who is getting the worst of the scrap.

No one, it will be obesrved, has been put through the mill for saying a good word for Sampson.

The man who feels every inch a king at night is very likely to feel like the deuce the next morning.

A new broom is able to raise more dust in a minute than a fresh young man can psoduce in a thousand years.

Women in Germany cannot be said to be dragging behind the times; they want the family washing done by a trust.

It's a lucky thing for the average man that he doesn't know some of the things that other people know about him.

Mark Hanna believes labor and capital should be drawn closer together, particularly when Mark is running for office.

President Schwab has gone to Europe for a rest and to see what new ways he can find for getting action on part of his salary.

Having hastily approved of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the members of the senate can now proceed to read it at their leisure.

It takes a genuine philsopher to discover a number of good and sufficient reasons why other people should be satisfied with their condition in life.

The masculine animal doesn't cut much ice from the time females cease to slobber over him as an infant until they begin to kiss him as a man.

President Roosevelt is going to keep all of the members of the former cabinet—provided he finds after mature deliberation that he can use them.

Had Maclay stood much longer on the order of his going the navy department would probably have raised the window and wigwagged the janitor to get busy.

With Hanna and Foraker about to do battle to see which one owns Ohio, the movement to establish popular government in that state does not seem to be making much headway.

The new combine of tobacco growers in the Philippines will impress the Filipinos with the fact that their islands are really and truly domestic territory of the United States even more than does the supreme court decision.

Berenice, The Beautiful.

The Tragedy of a Luckless Marriage --- Love That Seemed Too Late---Out of the Depths.

By JEANNE STODDERT.

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Begun in No. 52, Dec. 28. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

When the fight between Sammy and the boy had been adjusted, Berenice turned to a wee tot of five, whom she had given some pennies.

"I got gum and swallered it—un it's all gone—un I ain't got no more," she said, smiling, as she shut her small teeth together, seeming to enjoy the joke.

"I am going to give you a whole quarter this time, and you must keep it until you have enough money to buy a new dress; that one is torn; now don't lose it. And you, Iky?"

"I put it py me to git shoes," answered the little Pole.

"Yer didn't neither, you traded it to Bones fer a revolver un got it hid."

"So you told me a story, Iky," said Berenice, reproachfully, "you were not brave enough to tell the truth. Well, that means I must leave you out this time. What can you want with a revolver?"

"Humph!" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Ze man py de pawnshop gif me a dwenty-fife cent; it only cost me den, I've got it py me in de pank."

"Well, here is a quarter to add to it, but why are you crying, Emmy?" she said to a slim, brown-haired girl.

"'Cause I didn't do nothen with my money; Gus stole it to buy whisky, ma said, un Gus said es ma took it fer liquor, un I don't know which nor how."

"There, don't cry. I will see what can be done for you. Are you very unhappy?"

"Yes; they beat me, ma un Gus, an' I'm hungry."

"And who is Gus, your brother?"

"Nop; he's our boarder," she said, drying her eyes.

"Go down to Mrs. Deans and tell her that I said to give you a nice warm breakfast. I will talk to her about you; here is another quarter."

"All right, mum, I wont let ma and Gus know this time."

"I bought some papers of Binky, un sole 'em, an' I'm goin' ter be a newsboy; that's what I've been a wanten," said a bright looking youth of twelve.

"What is your name?"

"Bob Reed."

"I am proud of you, Bob, and am going to give you a dollar to set you up in business. See how much you can make out of it."

"Thankee, ma'am," said the prize-winner, as he clutched the money, whirled around on his heel and sent forth a warwhoop.

"I want to buy papers, too," cried several of the older boys, crowding around the carriage.

"Oh, you must think up something else to do; you cannot all be newsboys. And even though you are, you must make some kind of an effort first, that I may see what you can do."

"Please, ma'm," said a small blue-eyed girl with a turned-up nose, "mayn't I have my money for a hat with flowers on like your'n?"

"Yes; after you have bought a new dress to wear with it; you had better get the dress first. What did you do with your last change?"

Little Miss Vanity held up her very dirty forefinger with a ring for Berenice to admire.

"It's brass," said her brother, making sport of her finery.

"'Tain't," as she turned and pulled at his hair. "Mind your own business, Ben Simpson; it's pure gold—'cause the man said so; and the set is a pearl."

"Oh, come off, it's nothin' but green glass—anyway, pearls hain't green."

"They be, too; that's all you know about it," she rejoined, turning the ring on her finger in evident admiration.

"How much did your parasol cost?" asked the inquisitive miss, as she looked longingly at the lace affair beside Berenice. "Maybe I'll save my money for a parasol, after all."

"Which would do you the most good, a parasol or some shoes and stockings?"

"The parasol, 'cause it's pretty and shoes ain't. But I guess I'd rather have a hat with flowers on than anything.' '

"Well, I will tell you," said Berenice, as the child hungrily eyed the headgear, "if you will think up something to do with the money which I give you, so that you can make more out of it, I will help you buy the hat; but I wouldn't buy any more rings or pretty things until you have shoes and other necessaries."

"All right, ma'm, I know; I'll buy flower seeds an' plant 'em an' make 'em grow an' sell 'em. Granny 'll help me," she said, snatching the money and running away.

"I bought some oranges for Katy," said a stout son of Erin. "Katy's my sister an' she's a hunchback; she fell un hurt her. I bought her a top, too, a red one, but she don't like tops, and the man wouldn't take it back. Katy wants a quarter, too, but she can't come out."

"You are a good brother," said Berenice, "take care of your sister and I will help you to make money with which to support her. Where is your mother?"

"Dead. I hain't got none; there's just pa, and he hain't much 'count; he gits drunk un I have to fetch him home, but he is good to us when he ain't in liquor, un buys us pies un molasses un lots of good things. He's goin' ter help set me up fer a bootblack, un I'm goin' ter save my money that you give me. I would the other, only Katy was a cryin' and I wanted ter make her laugh."

"Here is money for your business, and this is for Katy. I think you have some noble qualities.

She was surprised to see the young urchin grab the ragged brim of his hat and thank her.

"I bought Jeff with my money," said the next boy, who held a vagabond cur by a rope. "Jeff's a bull an' the best fighter you ever see. He licked Scrubby's dog all holler t'other day! jiminy! but you oughter heerd him yelp. He liked ter of cleaned his hull hide off'n him. Jeff's a cracker-jack, I want to tell ye," said the owner, proudly.

"But I cannot see that he is a very good investment," said Berenice. "What good can he be to you; how can you make any money out of a dog?"

The boy looked down sheepishly, then winked his eye at his companions.

"I'll tell yer, don't cher know, they set him ag'in all the honery dogs es comes 'round and bet which 'll lick; they didn't low ter tell you," said Tilly, "but they been a bettin' money on Jeff, an' Fitz. Fitz is Scrubby's dog, an' Jeff purty nigh killed him. Mrs. Dean says it ain't right, that it's gamblin'."

"Oh, Tilly, you allus have ter give everything away, you hain't got no sense. I'll slap you fer this," said her brother, angrily.

"I must look into this," said Berenice, gravely. "Mrs. Dean is right and any boy whom I find spending his money in this way shall have no more to spend. I think, Joe, that I cannot give you anything this time."

"Well, I made more than Bob did a sellin' his papers.'"

"Yes; but you made it in the wrong way, and you know these boys couldn't afford to lose their money."

"Some of 'em won."

"But it is not right to hold out inducements or to enter into anything which is going to enrich one while it ruins and starves the other. That is what makes most of the misery in the world."

"They didn't haf ter bet," persisted the boy with the dog.

"No; men don't haf to drink, neither," said the boy who hunted the saloon for his profligate father, "but they do it ef they see human bein's are weaker un water, un the whisky temptin' 'em, pa says, 'cause water''s weaker un whisky. Pa says they oughten ter make the dern stuff."

"You are right minded, Larry, but we will take up this question again; I am anxious to know what you all think about it. But, remember, there is to be more gambling."

Berenice drove on to the last house in the lane. A tumbled-down two-story brick, set far back from the street, as were all the houses in the row. But this was the only one that boasted a blade of grass.

Sitting on the dilapidated steps, was a pretty little crippled girl with blue eyes and long red curls, whose fresh gingham apron and cleanliness quite distinguished her from the rest of the children.

Seeing Berenice, she jumped up gladly and hobbled to the gate on her crutch with a doll in her arms. It was her seventh birthday and Berenice had sent the doll.

"Good morning, Lila, is your mother in?" asked Berenice.

"Yes'm, I will go and tell her. Mamma said I must thank you for the doll; I love it; it goes to sleep in my arms when I sing to it an' she has a blue sash," said the little one, sweetly, as she hugged the doll close in her arms.

A pained expression came into Berenice's face as she watched the child hobble back to the house.

"I am especially interested in this case," she said, "I have been for some time. When they first came to my notice, I found them in a starving condition; the child was almost at death's door. It was several months ago, just after my return from abroad."

"And how did you happen to run on to them?" asked Maurice.

"I may tell you at another time," she answered; "it is a very sad story."

Going slowly down the beaten path to the gate was a small, dark-eyed woman, neatly dressed in a fresh print; still young, she did not look to be thirty.

She appeared somewhat confused at the sight of a stranger. As Berenice introduced her companion, Maurice was surprised to listen to her low, cultured voice, and intelligent conversation. She seemed quite out of place in this dirty lane.

Slipping a roll of bills into her hand, Berenice said:

"How is your cough, Mrs. Dean, and what does the doctor think of it?"

"He encouraged me greatly," answered the woman, a bright smile lighting up her delicate features. "He says the trouble is not with my lungs, but is simply a little nervous cough, which he hopes to cure in a very short time. I am so relieved for the child's sake; otherwise, I would not care. Lila is so happy with her doll; she has hugged it ever since it came. I never saw a child so wild with delight. I cannot thank you properly, Mrs. Page, but we do thank God every night for sending us such a friend."

"I am only sorry that I cannot do better by you, but tell me, have the workmen been here yet to fix up the house?"

"Yes; they are inside now, and you would be surprised to see the improvement going on. The school room is almost finished and quite large enough, I find. I think I have found a matron whom you will approve.'

"I am glad of that; please have her here in the morning; I will be around to talk with her. How are you getting along with the sewing?"

"Nicely; in two more weeks I think we shall be quite ready to begin work. Oh, Mrs. Page, you don't know how those mothers will bless you for the good which you are doing. Many in the lane are buried beneath misfortune; worthy people, who only want the opportunity to help themselves. Of course, there are a number of profligates but I am glad to say they are in the minority. I have not told the children as yet anything about your project; it will be such a happy surprise to them; you have won all their hearts. I think that even the worst boy in the lane would fight for you."

"I hope they will not be hard to control. I feared so and am greatly pleased at what you have told me. I love them all, these ragged little urchins, each with his individuality. I will be around again in the morning. Good-by, Mrs. Dean; but, ah, I forgot, please send for another doll; it must be exactly like Lila's and make it a red dress; it is for little Susie in the second house; you may send it to her when finished and dress another for the little hunchback. Did the little girl come for her breakfast?"

"Yes; poor child, she is terribly abused."

"I wish, Mrs. Dean, that you would take her in and make her comfortable until I can think of some other arrangement."

"How happy 'twill make her, Mrs. Page; she is still here. I have wished that I might do this; she is surrounded by such bad influences."

"If you need any more money let me know; there are so many things to look after at present. How nicely the grass is coming up in your yard; good-by."

"The doctor does not know about this," said Maurice, as they drove away.

"No, indeed; I am laboring under difficulties; he watches me so closely. It is only the last week or two that I have concluded to interest myself in this way. My ideas are yet quite vague. It all came about by my tossing the children some pennies one morning. Since then I have become quite interested in them; they watch for me every morning. I want to teach them to help themselves; and instead of spending these small amounts upon them, I prefer to trust it to them, and thus early teach them the value and the proper use of money.

"But I am quite interested in the school, where I hope to have them taught and trained in a practical manner for the battles of life. I shall also see that all are comfortably clothed and well-fed. There is to be no time idled, no useless study indulged; and I shall endeavor to fit each one for that which he is most and naturally adapted. But my great ambition is to found a home for mere babes, who may be reared and trained, without opposition and home influence. I am anxious to know what kind of men and women it will make, and if the seed of depravity, crime and wickedness are inborn, inherited. I am inclined to think that human beings who are subject to the same influences and environments will have much the same natures. I am one of those who believe that most wrong-doing is the result of forces outside our own hearts and minds'"

"I think that you are mistaken. Human beings are just as the seeds of the pansies and the verbena planted in the same pot of earth. They produce different blooms," said Maurice. "Some natures have larger brain power, more enduring muscles, and greater moral strength than others."

"Yes; but every one admits that the greater portion of the after life of men, if indeed not all of it, takes its bent from the mother's hand. Of course there would be much in selecting nurses and teachers, especially fitted for this work. From what I can learn, the ignorant classes have but little patience with their offspring. They teach brutality by cuffing and beating them in the most inhuman way, for the most trivial offense. They learn in a remarkably short time how to use their fists and have their dispositions ruined from the start. They are taught selfishness, heartlessness, and crime from the very cradle, and it is no small wonder that they become criminal later on."

"Well, it is a good cause, little girl, and if you want to experiment with the kids, I will furnish the funds a little later on, and lend what assistance I can."

"Ah, Maurice, how happy you have made me."

After they had talked upon this subject for some time, Maurice asked:

"Who is this Mrs. Dean? She seems to be in the wrong pew; quite a superior woman, I should judge."

"And so she is," said Berenice. "Eight

years ago she was a bright, happy, innocent girl; an orphan who came into possession of some means, and was unfortunate enough to be taken in by a scoundrel, who ruined, robbed, and threw her upon the world. The crippled child is the result of this unhappy liaison. I followed her to her home the night the little one was thought to be dying; such poverty, such grief and misery I never saw before."

"And where did you follow her from?" inquired Maurice, his suspicions aroused.

"From my own home, she was there seeking aid; I heard her pleading, and—well, I slipped out of the house after her."

"You have aroused my suspicions. Tell me the truth. Is the child his? Is he the villain in the case?"

After waiting a few minutes to reply, she said: "You have guessed the truth."

"When you are out of his clutches I shall force him to pay back every cent of his ill-gotten gains. What a scoundrel!"

CHAPTER VII.

Berenice ordered luncheon served in the bower, as she called a small retreat enclosed with a dense growth of clinging ivy and morning glory vines. It was sweet with cut violets and roses while a canary screened among the leaves sang merrily.

With such environments they were soon enabled to throw off the depressing effects of their morning call in the slums, and lent themselves joyously and with keen appetites to the prettily served luncheon, with its cool, tempting viands and ices.

They were both unspeakably happy, and Berenice felt her color coming and going as Maurice sought her gaze, for there was no mistaking the look of longing and admiration that shone in his eyes.

She wore one of those thin white gowns which lent such youth, and, by contrast, such richness to her coloring.

She had tucked one of the roses in her dark hair and as she sat opposite talking gaily while she bit a strawberry from its green stem, it was all that Maurice could do to restrain himself from snatching her in his arms. Her fascination maddened him.

"What freshness, beauty, and witchery," he thought. For with all her womanliness, Berenice was a born coquette. And as she beguiled him with her merry chatter and laughter, Maurice thought in all his thirty years, this was his nearest approach to happiness.

Suddenly he seized her hand and pressed it to his lips, then dropped it quickly as a shadow fell across the doorway and a young girl somewhere near fourteen years of age, stood before them holding in one hand a large, heavy satchel, and in the other a hat box and plaid shawl confined by a strap.

She wore a brown holland, made with a simple yoke, and resting on the back of her head was a hat of coarse yellow straw with broad green streamers and a wreath of cherries fastened about the crown.

A wealth of silky, red-brown curls fell about her face and shoulders.

She stood for a moment, her large brown eyes opened wide with wonder, then asked:

"Where's daddy?"

"Who?" questioned Berenice.

"Daddy—the man that drove the carriage said this was his house."

"You must be mistaken. Whose house are you looking for? What is your father's name?"

"Doctor Page—don't he live here?"

Berenice paled a trifle as she and Maurice exchanged mysterious glances, then, rising, said:

"Be seated, wont you, and put down your satchel, it is heavy for you. Yes; this is Doctor Page's home; have a glass of lemonade, you look very warm. When you have rested you may tell us about yourself. Where are you from?"

"Deadwood."

"Dakota?"

"Yes'm." Then eyeing her furtively, the girl, half woman, half child, asked:

"Are you my new ma?"

At this unexpected turn in the conversation Berenice laughed in spite of the alarming situation, then answered pleasantly, "If I have any step-children this is my first knowledge."

"Why don't you know about me?" asked the girl, with evident surprise. "I am Mary Page—Molly they call me; I'm his only child."

"And with whom have you been living all these years?"

"Mrs. McAfee. I never saw my father but a few times and not for four years. He owes Mrs. McAfee for my clothes and board so she just packed me up and sent me to him; she's threatened it many's the time before. He said I was big enough to care for myself; and she, Mrs. McAfee, said I must finish my education first; that he was rich and it was a shame; that he bought his new wife beautiful clothes and carriages and jewelry and everything," she said, talking faster and faster as her brown eyes dilated. Then they fell to her lap, as she fumbled with her handkerchief and continued, sadly: "But he didn't for my poor ma, 'cause she died of a broken heart when I was just five years old. Then he got Mrs. McAfee to take care of me and promised her a lot of money, but he wont pay it and he wont buy me any more clothes—or anything. Mrs. McAfee bought this new hat for me and my shoes all out of her own savings. Mrs. McAfee says I ought to be a rich heiress some day, but I don't think he cares much about me, 'cause he never sends me anything Christmas, like other girls' fathers, and I don't like him, either; he's cross. I just about cried my eyes out when Mrs. McAfee put me on the train and went away and left me. He wont be a bit glad to see me."

"Poor child," said Berenice, her sympathies at once awakened, "do not bother; I think he will not be cross with you."

The girl laughed, then quickly explained. "You call me child, and I'm most as big and old as you. You seem such a funny ma, but I like you 'cause you are so pretty and wear such nice clothes and smile at me thataway."

"You must be hungry and tired," said Berenice. "Come, I will take you indoors and have Theresa look after you—never mind your luggage," the the child stooped to pick up the heavy satchel. "Sam will bring it right up."

"Be careful of the hat-box, Sam," the girl called to Maurice, "the bottom is most out."

"I'm not a bit hungry," said the child, as she followed Berenice across the lawn. "I bought a dozen bananas on the train and ate them everyone. I always wanted all the bananas at once that I could eat, and I had 'em. And I bought some figs, too, for you," as she hunted for the pocket in her dress and took out a small wooden box.

"Oh, thank you," said Berenice, with evident delight, "how did you ever guess that I was so fond of figs?"

"Because everyone is. My, but this is a big house. The houses in Deadwood ain't half this big, even Mrs. Taylor's, and she keeps boarders."

She was a pretty girl, tall for her years, with the same red curls that seemed to be the heritage of all the stray waifs whose existence he was responsible for. But her eyes were different; his were small, a gray-blue, while her's were large, luminous, frank, with a rich warmth to their coloring; they were red-brown like her hair.

Leading her up the stairway to a pretty blue and white chamber, the girl looked around wonderingly, delightedly.

"My, aint this nice and clean and pretty? Sure I wont spoil anything? I like it. I wish Mrs. McAfee could see this. Do you think he will let me stay?"

"Oh, yes," said Berenice, "you have nothing to fear; make yourself comfortable. You had better take a nap, it will refresh you."

"Oh, but I couldn't sleep with everything so strange, anyhow. I traveled in the chair car and slept fine. Are you sure I can stay? Because Mrs. McAfee says I am not to come back there and I don't know any place else to go, but I must write her a postal; she gave me one, and tell her that I'm here all right. She cried a little when she left me, because she said after all I seemed like her own; and I felt sorry, too, when she waved her hand to me and the train started and I couldn't see her face any more—for if she was cross most always it was because she was tired and they was poor, and when the new baby come she said she could not keep me any longer, that it was taking out of her own childrens' mouths to feed me, and you know daddy hadn't paid her for four years and wouldn't answer her letters, nor anything. I will have so much to say, I can't get it all on a postal card. I am going to tell her how pretty you are, and what a funny ma. You ain't a bit like Mrs. McAfee, and I thought you would be, only with fine clothes and rings and things. You don't look like anybody, just yourself and the picture of a fine lady with a necklace and a rose in her hair that hangs over the mantle in the settin' room at home, but it ain't home," she said, reflectively, "that is not mine. I ought to know by this time. I was told often enough. May I have a pencil, please?"

Berenice opened the small writing desk. "Wouldn't you like to write a letter? You will find everything here and stamps in the little drawer."

"Oh, sure; ain't this splendid. Might I write one to Sally Winters, too? She's my chum, you know. I can't stay here; he wont let me; he don't like me if I am his child. I've heard 'em say so. Nobody likes me or wants me," she said, as a heavy sigh escaped the full red lips.

This thought seemed to constantly trouble her peace of mind.

Berenice reflected: what a short time since had the same wail passed her own lips. Tears of sympathy stood in her eyes as she crossed over to the child seated at the desk.

"You must not feel and talk like that, for I want you and love you already, so do not bother any more," as she smoothed the red curls, then stooped and kissed the pink cheek.

This highly interesting story of a woman's unfortunate marriage leads in future chapters to very dramatic results. Readers will do well to follow the beautiful Berenice to the close. Free patterns and cameras are still being sent out in large numbers to subscribers as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

SURRENDERED.

To Hot Biscuits and Warm Pie.

Bombarding a stomach with hot biscuits and warm pie, plenty of butter, bacon, greasy potatoes, and a few other choice delicacies will finally cause the fortifications to give way. Then how to build back on good food is worth knowing.

A man in Factoryville, Pa., attacked his stomach in about this way and says: "The sign of surrender was plain in my white, colorless face. At that time every article of food distressed me, and heart-burn kept me in continued misery. I liked all sorts of breakfast foods but they did not agree with me. Of course, much of the food that I ate contained nourishment but my stomach could not get the nourishment out. I tried pepsin and other aids to digestion which worked for a time and then gave out.

Finally I reasoned, when in an extremity, that if the stomach could not digest the food why not take some food that was already digested like Grape-Nuts. So I started in on Grape-Nuts and the new food won my palate straight away and agreed with me beautifully.

The heavy, oppressive feeling disappeared and I became thoroughly impressed with the new food and began to improve at once. Little by little my strength came back and slowly and surely I gained my lost weight. The wasted tissues and muscles built up, and today I am well, buoyant and strong.

I unreservedly give the chief credit to Grape-Nuts which met me in a crisis and brought me over the dark period of despondency. Nothing else did it for nothing else could be endured.

Please withhold my name." Name can be given upon application to the Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Unheard Of!

When Booker T. Washington began his early attempts to arouse the colored men of the south to work regularly, save their money, stop stealing chickens, lead good lives, etc., one of his agencies was the establishment of schools. Money was scarce, and it was a day of small beginnings. The first class was held on the porch of a house, but it rapidly outgrew the accommodation, and in casting about for ampler facilities he found an old, abandoned hen-house. Finding a venerable darky idle he said to him, "Sam, you go up tomorrow morning and clean out that old hen-house back of Mr. Blank's house."

"Sho'ly, Mr. Washington," was the reply, "you won't clean out a hen-house in de daytime?"

To Women Who Dread Motherhood!

Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth; or remain childless. Dr. J. H. Dye has devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that all pain at childbirth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, Box 137, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain; also how to cure sterility. Do not delay but write today.

He Drank Alone.

He got on a train at a way station and sat down beside me. He was long, lean and lanky. First he looked out of the car window and then at me. Settling deeper into his seat he suddenly remarked:

"Dry day, eh?"

I merely nodded my head affirmatively.

"Do you drink, young man?"

I said I didn't mind if I did.

He said he would mind, though. "Furthermore," he continued, "I am surprised that a man of your modest appearance, with eyes denoting Christian breeding, a forehead denoting good moral character and a mouth too pure to withstand the taint of intemperance, should be willing to indulge in the flowing bowl."

I could only squirm about in my seat and prepare myself for an eighteen-carat temperance lecture about to be thrust upon me.

"And, young man, do you know that hundreds of homes have been devastated by strong drink?"

I knew.

Do you realize that the idols of manhood have been shattered and wealth squandered by liquor?"

I realized.

"Are you aware that wine is a mocker and drink is the national curse?"

I was aware.

"Are you cognizant of the fact that every glass is the foundation-stone of intemperance?"

I was cog.

"Do you know that wines, liquors and cigars are the advance-agents of insobriety? And, young man, for the sake of your parents; for the good of your wife—if you have one; for the respect of your children—if you have any, I want you to make me one promise——"

"And that is?" I hurriedly interrupted, willing to promise anything, for his words had aroused me, and I knew I had been groveling in the dark and that every drink was a blot on the sunshine of my home.

"I want you to promise me that you will not let another drop of liquor pass your lips."

"I won't!" I almost shouted, extending my hand as a seal to the faithful adherence to my promise.

"And you will not yield to temptation?"

"I will not."

"Thanks, young man, thanks." And with that the mean, groveling, contemptible, long, lean, lanky hypocrite put his hand to his side pocket, brought forth a pint flask of whisky and drank to his heart's and stomach's content, while I sat up like a buncoed commuter amid the giggling occupants of the train.

Skiing Behind Horses.

Not content with ordinary ski-running and jumping, the officers in the Swedish army, keen and good sportsmen as they are, have recently introduced several novel ideas. They have taken up ardently a form of skiing in which they slide on ski behind trained horses that pull them at full gallop over the snow.

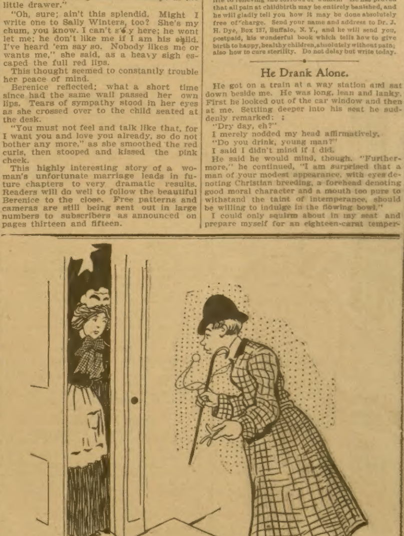
Skiing behind horses is a very pretty accomplishment. The driver holds a long pair of reins, and a long whip in his hands, and harnesses himself to his horse with the help of a long cord, or leather thong, which passes the horse's chest and behind the driver's back. The horse is put to full gallop over the snow, and the driver slides easily behind, the snow offering so slight a resistance that the horse has practically no weight to pull.

A forty-mile race between twelve officers mounted on ski, drawn by their cavalry horses, recently took place in Sweden between the university town, Upsala, and Djursholm, near Stockholm. The finish to this race was a magnificent sight, for the winning post was on the top of a steep hill, and the racers had a hard struggle as they came in; uphill going on ski, even behind horses, is hard work, and it is a difficult matter to keep balance. The horses strained and plunged through the snow, their breath like steam; the drivers were half-frozen and their mustaches had icicles hanging from them. It will give an idea of how easily a horse can drag a man on ski over snow—when the snow is deep enough for fast skiing, and not too deep for the horses—when I state that the winner of this race, a famous cross-country rider, accomplished the forty miles in two and a half hours.—Pearson's.

Natural Sequence.

Father—Why are you so anxious to get married, my son?

Son—Oh, heredity has something to do with it, I suppose.



Caller—Don't forget to tell Miss May I called.
Servant—I'll go up and tell her right away.

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A LITTLE THING.

Changes the Home Feeling.

Coffee blots out the sunshine from many a home by making the mother, or some other members of the household, dyspeptic, nervous and irritable. There are thousands of cases where the proof is absolutely undeniable. Here is one.

Mrs. C. K. Larzelere, Antigo, Wis., says, "I was taught to drink coffee at an early age, and also at an early age I became a victim to headaches, and as I grew to womanhood these headaches became a part of me, as I was scarcely ever free from one.

About five years ago a friend urged me to try Postum Food Coffee. I made the trial and the result was so satisfactory that we have used it ever since.

My husband and little daughter were subject to bilious attacks, but they have both been entirely free from them since we began using Postum instead of coffee. I no longer have any headaches and my health is perfect.

If some of these nervous, tired, irritable women would only leave off coffee absolutely and try Postum Food Coffee, they would find a wonderful change in their life. It would then be filled with sunshine and happiness rather than weariness and discontent. And think what an effect it would have on the family, for the mood of the mother is largely responsible for the temper of the children."

Johnny's Prompt Answer.

"What are marsupials?" asked the teacher, and Johnny was ready with his answer.

"Animals that have pouches in their stomachs," he said, glibly.

"And for what are these pouches used?" asked the teacher, ignoring the slight inaccuracy of the answer. "I'm sure that you know that, too."

"Yes'm," said Johnny, with encouraging promptness. "The pouches are for them to crawl into and conceal themselves when pursued."

A CURE FOR ASTHMA.

Asthma sufferers need no longer leave home and business in order to be cured. Nature has produced a vegetable remedy that will permanently cure Asthma and all diseases of the lungs and bronchial tubes. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases (with a record of 90 per cent. permanently cured, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all sufferers from Asthma, Consumption, Catarrh, Bronchitis and nervous diseases, this recipe in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail. Address with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. Noyes, 841 Powers Block, Rochester, N. Y.

Steady Supply.

"Your imperial grace," said the slave, "there are no lamplighters and no paper to make them with."

"Oh, don't worry," responded the sultan, "the morning mail is sure to bring a fresh batch of ultimatums."

His Little Game.

Sandy Pikes—Yer are pretty lucky, Billy. Do yer go right up an' ask de women folks for pie?

Billy Coalgate—No; I asks fer a cake of soap. Dat dazes dem so dat I just walk in and help myself to everything befor dey recover.

Too Mercenary.

"Here's more strange talk in this magazine," said Mrs. Ransom, with an expression of scorn on her sharp features. "I guess it's just as well, Hiram Ransom, that we never were blessed with money, so's we could immigrate down below, as you've always wanted to."

"What's the matter now?" inquired Mr. Ransom, patiently, although his wife's snort of contempt had waked him from an agreeable slumber on the haircloth lounge.

"Matter!" echoed Mrs. Ransom; "matter enough, I should say! Here's a column of questions asked by a parcel of young folks, and what does one of the young men want to know?"

Mr. Ransom feebly shook his head.

"He wants to know," said his wife, rattling the magazine, " 'what salary ought a young man to have to marry?' That's the way these city folks marry off their daughters so easy! But I guess Sarah and Ellen and Jane will stay with us till they're sixty years old before I'd bemean myself, or let you, Hiram Ransom, by offering a young man a salary to marry one of 'em!"

Endless Possibilities.

"The Russians are having great success with their railway building," said the Observant Individual.

"They should have," said the Wise Gentleman. "Why, they are even better equipped than America in the matter of securing unpronouncable names for their sleeping cars."

EVERY LADY READ THIS.

I will send free a positive cure for all female diseases, irregularities, etc. A simple home treatment, a common sense remedy that never fails. FREE with valuable advice. MRS. L. V. HUDNUT, South Bend, Ind.

And She Did.

Wife (an invalid)—The end is near, John. I'm sinking fast. Be a kind father to the motherless children.

Husband—Oh, don't worry about the children. I'll soon get another mother for them.

Wife (sitting up in bed)—Oh, you will, eh? Well, I guess you wont. I'll get well now if it kills me.

Mystery Explained.

Mrs. Hayrix—I cain't see heow them fellers what sends out th' weather reports kin tell what kind o' weather is goin' tew be tomorrer.

Uncle Hiram—I dunno, but I kinder suspect mebby they git their information outen th' almanacks, b'gosh."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25 cents a bottle.

He Won Out.

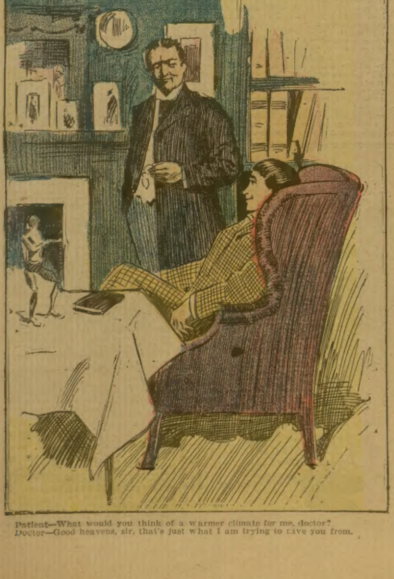
She—Poor fellow! So you loved and lost, did you?

He—No; I can't say that I lost anything. She returned all my presents.

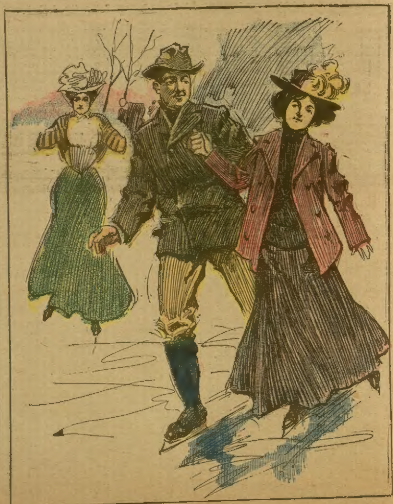
Pa's View of it.

Little Willie—What's a dry dock, pa?

Pa—Why—e—r—I suppose it's a physician who is thirsty, my son.



Patient—What would you think of a warmer climate for me, doctor?
Doctor—Good heavens, sir, that's just what I am trying to save you from.



"Your guest didn't make a long visit."
"No; she asked us to treat her like one of the family, but when I did so she left."

Ye Village Church.

Struggling Pastor—Nearly all the congregation has subscribed liberally for the building fund, and I feel sure that I can have your hearty co-operation. How much will you——

Mrs. Leader—Let me see. Oh, I am the only member who has a carriage and coachman, I think.

Pastor—Yes; the rest are poor.

Mrs. Leader—Well, I will drive around and collect the subscriptions.

STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO, } ss.
LUCAS COUNTY,

Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is the senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of Hall's Catarrh Cure.

FRANK J. CHENEY.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1886.

{SEAL.} A. W. GLEASON, *Notary Public.*

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally and acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Send for testimonials, free.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O.

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Hall's Family Pills are the best.

A Few Years Hence.

The ex-wire trust magnate glared at the luckless inventor of wireless telegraphy with unchecked wrath.

"When do I get the royalties you owe me for the use of my air?" he roared.

The poor inventor stumbled from the room, his mind already busy over the problem of devising an effective transmitting agent that would be a substitute for atmosphere.

Victory at Last.

Essie—Did she blush when you told her you knew all?

Bessie—Blush? Why, she colored to the roots of her hair.

Essie—Well, that's where she has tried to get the color for years.

One Man's Opinion.

"According to statistics," said the sweet girl graduate, "women live about ten years longer than men."

"Yes," growled the old bachelor, "and they might live fifty years longer if they weren't so shy about passing the thirty mark."

Artistic Realism.

"Can you make a water-color portrait of me?" asked Colonel Boozer.

"I can, Colonel," replied the artist, "but I'm afraid it would prove unsatisfactory. In order to do you justice it will be necessary to use alcohol instead of water."

One Man's Luck.

Brown—Did you buy that block of Gusher oil stocks you were speaking about?

Jones—No; I had a fortunate escape.

Brown—How was that?

Jones—A burglar cracked my safe and stole the money I was going to invest in it.

How He Won Her.

He had been paying tribute at the shrine of the fair maid for many moons and his progress was anything but satisfactory. One evening when he called the object of his giant heart throbs was admiring a pair of shoes she had just purchased.

"Aren't they lovely?" she queried. "I paid $7 for them at Fittem's."

"Is it possible!" he exclaimed, in affected astonishment. "What an awful big price for such a very little pair of shoes."

That night before retiring the happy maiden stole softly upstairs to her mother's bedside and broke the news of her engagement.

Where Memory Lingers.

Simkins—They say a graduate soon forgets what he learned at college.

Bifkins—Don't you believe it. Why, I can play football as well today as I could five years ago when I was at Yale.

Highly Appreciated.

Singleton—How did you like the poodle I sent your daughter for a birthday present?

Wederly—I never saw but one I liked better. It died the next day.

Undoubtedly.

"I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year," said the soubrette.

"Thank you," replied the contortionist. "I am reasonably sure of making both ends meet."

Danger in Delays

She—Would you hesitate before marrying a woman for her money?

He—Oh, no. A man who is marrying a woman for her money has no time to lose.

His Dialect.

She—Mr. Niblack is a very skillful golfer, isn't he?

He—I don't know about that, but he certainly is a very fluent golfer.

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We give the best premiums offered by any firm.

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STORYETTES.

SAVED THE NICKEL.

Mr. Hopkins arose from the breakfast table with the light of a high resolve shining in his resolute young eyes.

"My dear," said he, "I mean to inaugurate a new era of economy."

Mrs. Hopkins fluttered up to kiss him good-by.

"Indeed," she said, "and what are you doing that is so extravagant?"

Hopkins looked austere and businesslike, and bent upon his pretty new wife a supremely matter-of-fact look.

"We are both a litle—er—extravagant, my love," he said, "and I mean to set you a good example by walking down town and saving car fare."

Mrs. Hopkins made a little pout of disapproval.

"Save car fare!" she said. "How much of a fortune are you wasting while saving time and nervous tissue? I——"

"Ten cents a day, my love," observed Hopkins, decisively. "Seventy cents a week, $2.80 a month. I am determined, my dear, so let us say no more about it."

Mrs. Hopkins sighed. Mr. Hopkins took his new five-dollar umbrella and started down town.

Hopkins was in high good humor. He was economizing. The pavement beneath his feet seemed to be saying at every step:

"Save a nickel—
Save a nickel—
Nickel, nickel, nickel, nickel!"

"Hey, mister, look out!"

Br-r! zip! blop!

A kid had come coasting down the sidewalk and knocked poor Hopkins' legs from under him. A policeman came rushing up, but found it hard to determine which of the squirming tangle was Hopkins and which was the boy. There were muffled yells and stifled weeping and the policeman tore away to turn in a call for the patrol wagon.

Presently Hopkins unraveled himself from the wreck and stood surveying his broken umbrella and swearing at the kid with great fluency.

"Look at my umbrella, you young fiend!" howled Hopkins.

"Look at the wagon!" shrieked the boy, "an' look at me!"

A crowd began to gather. Hopkins wisely slipped away, lest he be mobbed. His new coat was ripped up the back, and the usefulness of his silk umbrella was gone forever. He purposely lost that unlucky article around the next corner. Immediately it began to rain.

Did you ever notice how much wetter and colder the rain is when you're miserable and have lost your umbrella?

Hopkins was half way to his destination, but was firmly resolved not to let his late mishap shake his new-born resolution regarding economy. He splashed on through the rain and mud, getting more wretched and more disreputable every second.

"I'll save this nickel," he muttered, doggedly, "or go to the hospital," and the rain drops that moistened his glasses and trickled down his neck served to increase the firmness of his resolve.

Then there came in sight a mackintoshed figure with damply shining hair and a frolicksome dog careering at the end of a string. Hopkins broke into a run in order to reach his office on time. The dog also accelerated his pace in order to meet and welcome Hopkins. The unlucky canine, finding himself in imminent danger of being run down, circled around the flying man and tangled his feet in the rope.

Poor Hopkins' unhappy destiny selected the largest and muddiest puddle and threw him into it with the snarling dog mixed up in a most bewildering manner with Hopkins' calves. The maiden shrieked and fainted. Hopkins rose and rose again, only to be tripped and thrown again and again by the wretched dog, which by this time had chewed his victim's anatomy in a way horrible to contemplate.

Again a policeman appeared.

"Phwat's the r-row?" demanded the official.

The young lady came from her swoon opportunely and pointed her finger at the prostrate and struggling Hopkins.

"He—he tried to steal my dog!" she wailed, hysterically.

"Ah, ye wud, wud yez?" said the officer, advancing threateningly. "Ye disreppytable thramp! Coom out av it, now!" and he seized poor Hopkins by the collar and yanked him into an upright posture.

"But," began Hopkins; but he was shaken into a state of breathlessness.

"Sthop thot, now! Ye'll coom along an' tell it to the coort!"

And Hopkins went—for he was crushed.

The Judge gave the prisoner a private examination before committal.

"And you say you'll buy to the extent of $10, Jack?" grinned his honor.

"Twenty of 'em, Bill," said Hopkins, "if you don't tell my wife."

Then the judge grinned, Hopkins grinned weakly, the policeman grinned and accepted $5.

"It's a good thing I ran across you before they got you booked," said his honor. Then he gazed at Hopkins' tattered clothing, mud-smeared figure, and scratched countenance.

"But you saved a nickel, didn't you, Jack?" and he laughed most unjudiciously.

"I'm ready to begin buying," said Hopkins.

An Unworthy Scion.

"Now, look here, young feller!" severely said the Old Codger, addressing his callow but self-sufficient nephew, who was dividing his time about equally between thinking himself the Whole Thing and furnishing sustenance to his first mustache, "its a good long spell since I occupied the place in the pathway of life where you now stand; and then I didn't have half the advantages and accomplishments that come easy to you. I didn't wear a shirt waist or patent leather shoes, nor smoke siggyrets, nor think I'd seen it all, and that if I was prematurely snatched away wisdom would go with me; but, by grab! I did have the tumtum and horse sense to know when two and two made twenty-two.

"I was a red-necked yokel in them days, I expect, and a mighty good subject for a comic picture, but when a pretty girl like the one I saw foolin' round on the parsonage porch at the pound party last night pinned a flower on my coat and tilted her dimply chin up just a little and looked sideways at the blossom, while a delicate blush like the dainty pink on the inside of a seashell tinted her cheeks—well, if I hadn't known what to do next, and done it, I'd a gone out at the first opportunity and let the—by gosh—hearse run over me!"

Took the Bait.

"I used to think I was some pumpkins," said the drummer, as he lighted his cigar in the office of a Detroit hotel the other evening, "but I hadn't been rubbing against the world over a year before I was saying nothing and sawing wood as hard as I could. About the first game I ran across was in Chicago. An old chap from the turnip fields, with a face as innocent as a baby's, came up to me on the street and wanted to know if I knew a fellow named John Smith.

"'You've been confidenced!' I said, as I looked at a bank check in his hand.

"'I guess not,' he replied, though he looked rather scared. 'I lent a feller $10, and he gave me this check for $20 to hold till he got back. You see it's signed "John Smith," all right, and that was his name. No, I don't think he's come any game on me. He looked like a decent feller.'

"It was so refreshing," said the drummer, "that I leaned up against a lamppost and laughed till my sides were sore. I told the old man that his check was not worth the paper it was written on, and that he ought to have known better and all that, and he finally grew quite indignant and said:

"'I don't believe he was any such chap. He said he's be back at 4 o'clock, and I'll bet he'll come. I'm an old hayseed, but I know a good man from a bad one.'

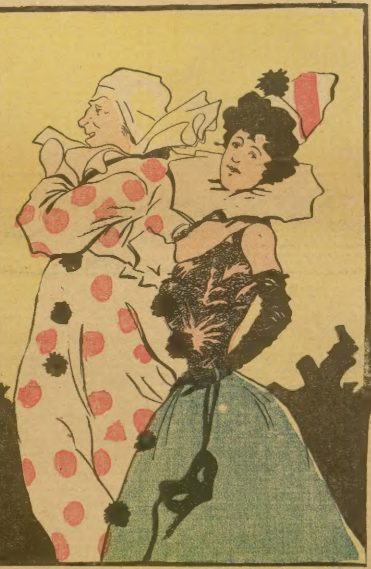
"'You'll never see him again, and you'd better look out, or somebody will get your boots.'

"'But I'm sure he'll come. I've got $20 here as says he will.'

"I didn't want to add insult to injury, but the old chap was so sure and saucy about it that I put up my twenty to teach him a moral lesson. A policeman was stakeholder, and we had only five minutes to wait. Then John Smith showed up, repaid the $10 and took back his check, and of course I lost my $20 and was humiliated into the dust besides. The old hayseed called the turn on me by advising me not to go far from my hotel, and to leave my watch in my room, and I was full of grief for three days. Then, on a corner a mile away, I caught him playing the same trick and understood that it was a put-up job."

"And that assuaged your grief?" was suggested.

"Well, perhaps. At least it made me realize that I was the biggest ass in the United States."



She—Miss Westerly says she likes mask aff airs.
He—Why so
She—Her father used to be a train robber.

The Way of Safety.

Unless a cyclist is a "scorcher" there is no need, generally speaking, to make any effort to avoid him. He will look out for the collisions.

A lady was crossing the street when she saw a bicycle rider coming toward her. She stopped, then dodged backward, and as he had swerved in order to pass behind her there was a collision and both took a fall, but neither was much damaged.

"If you hadn't wabbled, sir," she said, angrily, as he assisted her to rise, "this wouldnt have happened."

"Neither would it have happened, madam," he replied, "if you hadn't wabbled, or if you had wabbled in a contrary direction from my wabble. It was our concurrent and synchronous wabbling, so to speak, that caused it."

Then the cyclist, a college professor, doffed his cap, mounted his wheel, and rode on.

He has never felt love's power
Who takes note of time's flight
And doesn't take at least an hour
In which to say good night.

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REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

Oath-Bound Under the Black Flag--Story of Love and Daring in the Chinese Empire.

By ANNA L. SMITH,

Author of "Duchess of the Looms," "Cast Up by the Sea," Etc.

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CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE VULTURE'S TALONS.

We left George Ruthven and his bride, just at the moment when they were bound upon the backs of horses and were en route with their captor for the secret haunts of the Boxers.

As the rescuing party had divined, the brave girl-wife had torn a lock of curling hair from her abductor's head, feeling assured that her friends would thus discover that the villainous Spaniard was the instigator of the attack, and that she had fallen into the hands of the Spanish colonel, whom she had recognized, notwithstanding his disguise.

Half a dozen times, during the rapid flight of the party, she had contrived to shred away a lock of her own hair, but unfortunately it had floated to some hidden leafy nook, yet, as she was about to be thrust beneath the hood of the proa, she had adroitly entangled a shining tress in a bramble, which held it securely.

She felt assured that the unseen defenders whose rifles had carried death to more than one yellow Boxer and Spanish fiend, were scouts from the international force at Taku, and she had the strongest conviction that the gallant commanders at the fort would not allow this outrage to pass without the most strenuous effort to rescue herself and her husband.

The party journeyed rapidly for a short distance, and then traveled very leisurely, evidently not fearing pursuit. At sunrise a short halt was made, and the prisoners were allowed a share in the hasty breakfast of fruit and cocoanut milk.

It was but a brief rest, and scarcely had their cramped limbs regained the power of easy motion when they were again bound to the saddles, and their captors took up the march.

George had in a measure recovered from the effect of his wound, which had stunned but not disabled him permanently, but both captives realized the utter impossibility of escape while bound and guarded, and wisely remained passive.

George was surrounded by the disguised Spaniards and the fierce pirates, but Don Emilio rode a little apart from his followers, beside the bride, who remained disdainfully silent, not even replying to his occasional remark by a syllable.

They journeyed leisurely after the first half-dozen miles, halting for a midday rest of two hours, while the fierce rays of the sun fell in blistering patches wherever a rice swamp was crossed, but for the most part the path chosen was in the dense shade that tempered the sweltering heat.

The captors conversed little, and only in their native tongue, and their conversation was of course unintelligible to the captives.

Before sunset a halt was made at the foot of the cliff we have mentioned at the close of the last chapter, upon the very camping ground where Konalouk discovered the circle of dead warriors, and here Don Emilio prepared for a terrible drama.

Between the encampment and the towering cliff, and laving its base, ran a swiftly-flowing stream, as we have seen, a tributary of the Pei Ho, and from its bed, in many places rising high above the surface, jagged rocks reared their sharp points, lashing the water to foam as it was cut in twain against the granite needles.

The current was swift and strong, and except at the points ribbed by the rocky strata, the river was deep.

At a short distance below the encampment the stream was spanned by a rude bridge of giant mahogany logs.

The cliff rose abruptly from the bed of the stream to a height of more than fifty feet.

A fringe of hardy, satin-leaved shrubs cropped from crevices in the perpendicular wall, long banners of gray Spanish moss trailing in funereal banners from the boughs, clothing with a partial and somber verdure what otherwise would have been a bald rugged face of granite.

The table at the summit was dotted with majestic forest trees that cast their long shadows across the stream quite to the opposite bank, which sloped gradually to the water.

The bluff fell away in undulating swells, growing less and less precipitous, until it was barely on a level with the opposite bank where the rude bridge crossed the foaming torrent, which at that point narrowed abruptly, as it dashed between the rocky walls of the ravine.

A hasty meal was eaten and the motley crew dropped at full length upon the sod, wearied with the toilsome march, where they stoically awaited the orders of their villainous leader.

The sun was hovering like a sphere of lurid fire upon the very edge of the western horizon, when Don Emilio approached Ruthven, who, for the first time since his capture, was permitted to occupy a seat beside his bride, upon a fallen log, to which both were securely bound.

Casting himself at full length upon the ground, at a distance of a few feet from his captives, he coolly lighted a cigar and puffed vigorously for a few moments, as he silently regarded the twain through the wreaths of blue smoke floating in the hazy atmosphere.

He had removed the disfiguring stain from his face, discarded the Boxer costume, and now appeared in the dashing uniform of a colonel in the Spanish service.

He was indeed an eminently handsome man, a perfect Chesterfield in manner when he chose to assume the role of a courtier or carpet knight, and one unacquainted with his career would deem him quite incapable of the bloody deeds which had made his name a terror in the southern provinces.

But just now the glare of fiendish malignity with which he regarded his captives made his features positively diabolical.

Finally throwing away his still lighted cigar, he rose slowly to his feet and folded his arms across his broad chest, a sneering, demoniacal smile writhing his thin lips, disclosing his white, even teeth, which gleamed like pearls beneath a jetty, silken mustache.

"Well, Miss Hazleton," he drawled in English, "it is quite proper that we come to a perfect understanding."

Amoret paid not the slightest attention to his address, except that her lip curled disdainfuly.

"You quite forget that you are addressing my wife—or perhaps you are ignorant of the fact of our marriage," said George.

Don Emilio raised his dark brows.

"Oh! Ah—beg ten thousand pardons, although it appears scarcely necessary to burden the lady with a title which she is so speedily to exchange for a better—and, Sir Englishman, your ignorance of the situation is sufficient excuse for asserting your claim—but, allow me to impart the intelligence—that you are looking your last upon the light of day. When yonder sun sets your lovely bride will be a widow. I am the ambassador of the angel Azrael, whose wings already overshadow you. At sunset this lady will become your widow—in ten minutes after the moon rises she will be my wife!"

"Never! I will die a thousand deaths rather than wed such a monster of iniquity and cruelty! You may make me a widow—you can never made me your wife!" cried Amoret, passionately.

Her face went white as marble, but her violet eyes flashed defiantly.

"Never is time not measured in the earthly calendar. Again, fairest of the fair, let me assure you that you will be my lawful wife within the hour."

"You may have a mockery of a marriage, but no ceremony that can be binding, even if there was a clergyman who would lend himself to such an unholy farce!"

"Permit me to correct your very natural mistake, my dear. I have among my men a regularly ordained clergyman—a curate of the Church of England. To be sure his attire is not at present of the most approved clerical pattern, but the tunic of the Chinese assassin supplies the want of the surplice, and he is still empowered to tie the nuptial knot as fast as church and state can make it. Although he has fled from England to escape detection for a crime for which another suffered the penalty—penal servitude for ten years—he is still in full authority to perform the required service, so you can have no conscientious scruples."

George Ruthven fixed his eyes upon the face of the demon, as if he would transfix him by their indignant light, and Don Emilio's black orbs fell for an instant before that scathing, lightning-like gleam.

Recovering himself, he laughed tantalizingly. "Oh, you may glare as much as you like, my Johnny Bull—it rather adds to my triumph to see how I can rouse you to anger, and you on the threshold of eternity, with little time to repent. If you have a prayer to offer, do not neglect your last opportunity, or, stay—perhaps you too may desire the prayers of the clergyman——"

"If a devil can exist in human form, you are that fiend!" interrupted Ruthven, goaded to desperation. "Coward! Villain! Monster! Dare to perpetrate the diabolical crimes you threaten and the vengeance of an offended Deity will smite you with a curse from which you will shrink in terror! For myself, I scorn to plead for mercy. But for her, my innocent wife, I demand justice—if you have one spark of manhood, one drop of human blood in your black heart, take her back to her friends! Whatever may be my fate, I defy you—dastard, murderer! Do your worse! A white renegade herded with assasins is capable of murder!"

Don Emilio's face grew purple with rage, and then blanched to a chalky pallor.

"I shall deal with my wife as I choose," he sneered. "Ha! ha! Who will oppose me?"

"Vile wretch! Do you for a moment dream I would remain even for an instant were my bonds removed?" panted Amoret.

"Ho! ho! I neither desire, nor shall I permit you to hamper me by your presence—your turn comes next—I wish you to thoroughly understand my proposition. Had you, George Ruthven, not have wedded, you would at this moment have been enjoying your liberty. As it is, you must die, solely that my marriage with your widow may be legal in any court of law."

Turning again to Amoret, he continued:

"I do not wish to marry you from the slightest affection—you are altogether too pure and saintly to suit my fancy. My motive I do not feel called upon to explain. I shall make you my lawful wife. In ten minutes from this date the ceremony will be performed——"

"I'll die first!" she interrupted in a wailing tone. "Were I your wife I would gladly die—"

"And you shall have your own sweet will in that respect—most happy to oblige your whim—as I was on the point of explaining, in ten minutes after your second bridal ceremony you will be dead. One of my copper-faced friends will relieve you of the life which will be worthless. I wish to be free, and I do not propose to await the natural laws of nature. I see you begin to comprehend."

"Devil! Incarnate fiend!" thundered George Ruthven, as he strove to rise, tugging fiercely at his bonds. "Were I unbound I would lay you dead at my feet. I am willing to face your miserable band of cut-throats one by one, single-handed. Wretch—unloose these cursed fetters—meet me if you dare in combat. If you are not a poltroon, a coward, a sneaking hound, you will prove it now!"

"Don't flatter yourself that I shall rob my dove-like followers of their promised sport; they are of the gentle Empress Tsi An's lambs. I have pledged them a spectacle more exciting than a bull-fight, and I always keep my word, when it suits me to do so. The play must be played out. Upon second thoughts I have decided to give you a key to my actions, particularly as you will not betray my confidence. According to the familiar adage, 'Dead men tell no tales,' and the secret will be safe. For the past two years I have sworn to make Amoret Hazleton my wife. Did you but know the blood that courses in my veins you would comprehend that neither earth, heaven nor hades can move me from the course I have marked out—even to you the secret must be whispered."

He bent forward and whispered a few sentences close to the ears of his captives, and both listeners blanched to the hue of death.

"Merciful heavens!" gasped Amoret. "Can it indeed be possible!"

"What has induced you to divulge such a dangerous secret?" asked George, forgetting in his overwhelming amazement the awful peril that menaced him.

"I scarcely understand why, unless it be the prompting of the master whom I serve—His Satanic Majesty, or perhaps some other unseen force which I cannot control—my Evil Genius, perhaps," replied Don Emilio, with a reckless laugh that ran back from the face of the cliff in a hundred mocking echoes.

CHAPTER XX.

HURLED FROM THE CLIFF.

"I have divulged but a part of my secret. The remaining portion it is my whim to retain," continued Don Emilio. "You recollect our first meeting"—this to Amoret—"purely a chance, as you believed, but you were slightly in error, my dear madam, Mrs. Ruthven—once in a way I will gratify you by bestowing the title you will wear so briefly—you have cause to remember the evening when you were the guest of a friend in Tientsin, and you were promenading in the Taku road and you were accosted by a rough, uncouth individual whom you have always believed insane, and who would have succeeded in taking a kiss by force had not a gallant cavalier in the person of Colonel Emilio Estrance, an honorable attache of the Spanish legation, appeared opportunely upon the scene and hurled the wretch to the earth, and afterward, with courtly politeness, escorted you in safety to the home of your friend.

"As a natural sequence, both father and daughter were delighted—supremely grateful, and the brave defender of innocence and beauty was cordially invited to Golden Vale, an invitation he did not fail to accept, following up his advantage until he was on the most familiar footing with the family.

"But you will recollect one unlucky day, when the gallant knight made the mistake of offering his hand and heart to the beautiful Miss Hazleton, and, to his unbounded chagrin, was refused."

"You forget," interrupted Amoret, "the refusal was made in the most kindly terms. I did not love you, although I, blind that I was, esteemed you highly as a friend. It grieved me sorely to be compelled to wound you by a refusal."

"Love—bah! Love had nothing whatever to do with my scheme. No matter how the refusal was couched, it was a rejection, and as such interfered with my own deep-laid plans," he replied, sneeringly. "I repeat—all this you know, but there was more you did not know—you never dreamed that the supposed ruffian who assaulted you was one of my men disguised—a paid tool of my own, and that the whole little romance was cleverly planned for the express purpose of effecting an introduction, and at the same time a claim upon your gratitude and affection, or that the sole motive of my leave of absence was to form your acquaintance and ultimately make you my wife."

"But what possible motive could you have had, as you acknowledge you had nothing to with love in the matter? You are heir to a magnficent estate—how did you even know of my existence?"

"That I decline to inform you. It is sufficient that I became possessed of the knowledge and that a powerful motive influenced me. That it was not love I have acknowledged—I was at that time, as now, a colonel in His Majesty Alphonso's army, and at the same time in the secret service of Prince Tuan. Therefore it was an easy matter to obtain leave of absence from the legation, and as I paid a flying visit to Marchmont Villa to keep the old man in good humor, I killed two birds with one stone. So much for the past, and now it is of the present I would speak.

"The raid upon Golden Vale was not planned by the insurgents, but a scheme of my own, for my own purposes, the opportunity of making you my prisoner. I knew nothing of your marriage. Had you have remained unwedded, George Ruthven would have been left unmolested. Only my Spanish soldiers knew the real object of the attack, if I except the chief, Meia, and his two brothers, Lung Woo and Yono. The dove-like Boxers believe that the looting of Golden Vale is the sole object. The savage devils think only of murder and plunder, and it is vastly easy for a white man in the confidence of the wretches to stir up the

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Reaping the Whirlwind.

(Continued.)

blood of some petty chief, anxious to win glory and plunder.

"My speculation has turned out favorably. In a few minutes George Ruthven will be hurled from the highest point of yonder cliff to certain death upon the pointed rocks below, or into the yellow current which will bear him away to the Pei Ho, and thence to the gulf. Half an hour later you will be my legal wife."

"Never!" gasped Amoret.

"I hate you," continued the villain, taking no heed of the interruption. "I am bound to humble your pride, and I still have a more potent reason. Immediately after my marriage I shall follow the example of Bluebeard, of nursery lore, by directing one of these merciless devils to end your life. From yonder knoll we will together witness the descent of your gallant bridegroom from the cliff. The spectacle will be brief but thrilling—ha! ha!"

"Monster—fiend of blood, the curse of an offended God will rest forever upon you should you dare to perpetrate such a cold-blooded murder—a crime from which Satan himself would shrink! Brute in human form, is it possible that such as you could have been once an innocent babe—that you had a mother" breathed Amoret, in a hoarse moan.

"Impossible as it may seem, I had a mother. Had she survived my infancy I might have been—well, it is hard to determine what. Don't rouse the devil in my nature by further reference to my mother. I had also a father—curse him! His blood has fouled my life current at the fountain—tainted it from my birth—but further discussion is quite unnecessary," he added, abruptly, and with a ferocious gleam in his eyes. "Our private box is completed—the curtain will rise directly upon the first act in the tragedy—come'

George Ruthven struggled like a madman in his bonds, as Don Emilio grasped Amoret's wrists, dragging her to a slight elevation which commanded a full view of the face of the cliff.

He was a trained athlete, but vain were even his Herculean efforts to break his cruel bonds, which cut deeper and deeper into his wrists and ankles. His frantic struggles were useless.

"Ha! ha!" laughed his fiendish captor, "your training in athletic sports will avail nothing. Manila ropes are the safest insurances against your strength. Tug as you may, you cannot free yourself!"

He turned to his savage [illegible], speaking a few words in the Chinese language, and two of the fiercest visaged, accompanied by two swarthy, black-browed Spaniards, haste[illegible] the bound and still writhing man, and, [illegible] the ropes that bound his limbs to [illegible] lifted him and bore him away.

His face was white and convulsed, almost maniacal in its expression of horror and agony, as his bride's shriek rang out, piercing the heart of the husband who was powerless to aid her.

The next instant a horrible curse smote the air, and the bride sprang to her feet and rushed into the thicket, closely followed by Don Emilio.

The blood was spurting in a torrent from a wound in his cheek.

He had unbound her limbs and as she saw her husband borne away, she grasped the handle of a knife projecting from the girdle of a red-capped Boxer and plunged it into the face of her tormentor.

Half a dozen Spanish renegades bounded forward, seeing their leader fairly blinded by the blood flowing from his wound.

Flight was vain. Grasping her shoulders they dragged her back, dashing her violently to the ground at Don Emilio's feet.

"Tigress!" yelled the infuriated m[illegible]. "You shall pay dearly for this! Away with him!" he shrieked in a transport of fury, waving his hand toward George.

"Curse the luck! The sun has set, but we can witness the spectacle by the silver light of the moon, which will be quite sufficient to allow a fleeting view of our daring hero as he takes the leap."

Struggling still, George was dragged away in the direction of the bridge which must be crossed in order to gain the summit of the cliff upon the opposite side of the stream, and ten minutes later the party of five, including the bound prisoner, stood upon the verge of the dizzy height, clearly silhouetted against the background of star-gemmed azure, and in the ivory light of the moon.

Although separated from the encampment by the swiftly-flowing river, the cliff was scarcely more than a hundred yards distant, and within easy call.

"Adios!" yelled Don Emilio. "Adios, my darling senor!! May your journey to the devil's dominion's be completed with as much expedition as the commencement of the flight promises. Your lovely, termagant wife will join you in His Satanic Majesty's dominions as soon as her second wedding on earth is an accomplished fact. Again, adios!"

"Inhuman monster, a swift and sure vengeance will overtake you!" cried George Ruthven, in a voice that rang through the forest like a deep-toned bell. "Murderer—renegade Christian, beware! So surely as the dead are permitted to revisit the earth, I will return to haunt you till your dying day! Standing on the brink of eternity, I hurl at you with my last breath my dying curse! May it rest on you forevermore!"

"Hurl him over the cliff!" shouted Estrance, almost foaming with rage, as he clutched Amoret's arm and forced her head back until her horrified eyes rested upon the forms outlined against the sky.

Four Boxers stretched out their hands simultaneously, each eager to become the executioner. The doomed man reeled for an instant upon the brink, then made an awful plunge, and was lost to the view of the spectators in the black shadows enshrouding the base of the cliff and the black waters beneath.

As he trembled upon the verge, a dark cloud swept athwart the radiance, and the moon, in horror, veiled her bright face.

The hellish deed was done, and again the silver orb of night shone forth, but the spot where victim and murderers had stood was deserted.

A chorus of fierce, demoniacal yells broke from the demoniacal band in the encampment, answered by the shouts of the party hastening toward the bridge.

"El Demonio! Curses on him that it is not daylight. We might have witnessed the entire descent——"

A cry so wild and blood-curdling broke from the lips of the widowed bride that even Estrance, hardened though he was, paled—it was the maniac's fearful shriek, followed by a peal of insane laughter.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MANIAC BRIDE.

Don Emilio started back, fairly appalled, as shriek after shriek of maniacal laughter pealed out, echoing back from the cliff and dying away in sighing moans.

But not for a moment did he relent of his fell purpose of making the beautiful maniac bride his wife.

After a little her mood changed, while the fanatic crew, with the superstition of the North American savages regarding the insane, shrank away to the utmost of the glade, conversing in low tones.

Soon her mood changed, and she began to weep piteously, calling for the lover whom she fancied had gone upon a long and perilous journey.

She had quite forgotten her marriage.

"Will he return tomorrow?" she asked again and again.

"I have not the slightest doubt but that he will," replied Don Emilio, blandly.

"Tomorrow was to have been our wedding day," she continued. "The guests are bidden, but there are so many hidden dangers in his path that I fear he will not return in season. To defer a wedding is an evil omen, you know—it always brings woe. I have had such horrible dreams that George was falling—falling—falling from a dreadful height—from a cloud cap—descending like lightning to the earth, which opened and swallowed him, and oh, I cannot think—I cannot remember, but I fear some evil will befall him."

"I am sure he is quite [illegible]," returned the villain, soothingly, a diabolical plan flashing through his wicked brain—the feasibility of palming himself off as the missing bridegroom and thus gaining the hand of the widowed bride without unnecessary trouble.

With a view of testing her mental capacity he questioned: "Do you not recognize me?"

[illegible] poor girl looked in his handsome, wicked face with a bewildered stare.

"You are [illegible]

She paused, again scanning his face [illegible].

"Think," he said, authoritatively.

"I cannot remember your face, and it tires my head to think. I was up there," pointing to the clear heavens, "there—floating in the blue, counting the stars—millions and millions—it tires my head to think—it was all so strange! No, no, I don't want to think! It is so tiresome," she concluded, petulantly.

"I will tell you a secret," whispered Don Emilio, persuasively. "Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes—no—I don't know," she answered, in[illegible].

"It is this—George has returned. He has made an enemy and he is afraid of being recognized. A great crime has been laid to his charge, although he is innocent."

"Yes—innocent!" murmured the demented girl.

"He is near at hand, but disguised—you might not recognize him. He has made me his confidant, and begs you will meet him and have the marriage ceremony performed—strictly private, you know, none except the clergyman and witnesses must be present. If you consent, I will take the message and bring him at [illegible]."

"Consent?" [illegible]ed, almost mechanically, [illegible] but it will be rather [illegible]

She broke off [illegible] and looked in his face wistfully for a moment, then utter vacancy followed the puzzled expression.

"You surely understand," he returned, sharply. "George is in great danger, he is here in disguise and wishes you to marry him at once."

"Danger—danger!" she murmured, dreamily. "We are always in danger, even when we feel most secure, [illegible]

Her [illegible] head [illegible] upon her white hand.

"When?" he prompted.

"When something dreadful happened—I cannot remember—the strings snapped here—just [illegible]

She tapped her forehead lightly.

"Then the black shadows gathered in my heart—did you ever meet one without a heart? I did at some time, but I cannot remember when—it must have been ages ago—perhaps when I lived in that other body where I was happy. But now—now I fear the shadows."

"I think I shall have little trouble," he muttered, "but if she happens to resist I shall have my hands full with the cursed Filipinos, whose superstition will brook no harsh measures with an insane person. I'll chance it, and one of my countrymen must attend to the last act in the drama."

Beckoning one of his own men to remain in charge of the captive, he hid himself in the thicket, from which he soon emerged, his face stained to the hue of a Chinese, a light tunic and drawers taking the place of his uniform.

In form and height he was strikingly like George Ruthven, whom he was about to personate. A soldier had thrown aside his garments, which he exchanged for the garments of a missionary whose bones lay bleaching before the altar where he had been stricken down by a party of marauders.

A Boxer had appropriated the flowing gown, which now served to cloak a still more infamous deed.

This man, known as Vittorio Me[illegible] Chinese ranks, was in fact a [illegible]lishman, Jason Fales, and although a fugitive from his native land, was in truth empowered to perform the marriage service.

Two Spaniards approached to act as witnesses and the ceremony proceeded, the poor, demented girl allowing her hand to remain in the clasp of the villain, and looking about with a listless stare, paying not he slightest attention until the bridegroom was in the act of slipping the ring upon her finger—the fateful circlet of the Estrance family, which had come into his possession upon his twentieth birthday.

"With this ring I thee wed——"

The words sounded strangely harsh and discordant, and his speech was interrupted in a most unexpected manner.

The flash of the blood-red rubies attracted Amoret's attention.

With the suddenly aroused fury of the maniac she snatched the ring from her finger, casting it upon the ground.

"Two bleeding hearts! Hearts of fire—see how they burn and blaze! Woe! woe! woe! A curse clings to the bride upon whose hand that accursed circlet is placed!" she shrieked, the wild cry ending in a maniacal peal of laughter, and with a bound she cleared the open space and disappeared in the forest.

"Woe! woe! woe!"

The wierd cry was repeated in a shrill, clear voice—not an echo, not the shriek of the maniac bride, but a penetrating, unearthly moaning voice, floating in the air above the treetops, and ending, like the maniac's shriek, in a shrill peal of mocking laughter:

"Ha! ha! ha!"

The derisive laughter appeared to emanate from the face of the cliff over which George Ruthven had been hurled, and reverberating back from the dim forest aisles and the tangled jungle encircling the camp.

"Ha! ha! ha!"

Trembling with superstitious terror the red-handed assassins, brutes, whose physical courage was proof against mortal foemen, huddled about their leader.

"What mummery is this?" yelled Don Emilio, furiously. "How dare you stand shivering like a pack of cowardly curs? Scatter, every man of you! Beat up the bush and bring back the senora! She cannot escape! A hundred taels to the man who brings her and a like sum to the soldier, Spanish or Boxer, who takes her life!"

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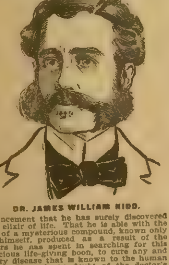

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BOYS AND GIRLS CORNER

EB NICKERSON'S SPOOK;

The Golden Giant With Diamond Eyes—A Thrilling Story for Old and Young.

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CHAPTER I.

"AWAY OVER BEYAND."

Barry More was an ambitious youth of fifteen. His life had been uneventful and he longed for adventure.

At the time of our story just after our civil war, Morgan Corners popularly called "Morgue Corners," was not a lively place, and Barry pined to get beyond the hills that environed the hamlet and see something of the big, mysterious world beyond.

He was too young for military service he had no desire to run away with a circus; he lived so far inland that he was never tempted to become a sailor or a pirate, and he was too full of enterprise to become a tramp.

What should he do?

It was Zeke Stebbins who showed him a way to a solution of the problem.

Zeke was a man of fifty. Some people said he was "as smart as a steel trap." He had traveled and made by the way, and he had it where he could show it. Not many of his poor farmer neighbors could have flashed much cash. He had been an appletree agent, it may be that there were some communities that he would not have visited a second time. Why? Well—once was enough for Zeke

He came into the house of Saul More, Barry's father, one spring morning and without waiting to be asked to sit down, occupied a chair and ejaculated:

"Jewhittaker!"

"What now?" asked Saul, anxiously, for Zeke's air impressed him.

"Well, by George! Ever hear o' Fortune Valley?" Zeke asked the question thoughtfully.

"Reckon I have, Zeke," replied Saul.

"I have," interposed Barry.

"Where is it?" asked Mrs. More.

"Away over beyond the mountain," declared Barry.

"Yes; away beyond several mountains," said Zeke, wisely. "It's Away Over Beyand

"Beyand what " queried Mrs. More

"W'y, beyand the river, to be sure," put in Mr. More, oracularly. "Thought everyone knew what 'Away Over Beyand means.' Seems you don't, nohow."

'Well what river?" asked the woman. "River Jordan, likely at not."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Zeke. "Not so tarnal far as that. Leastways, people have gone there and come back, an' ye can't cross the Jordan only jist goin', I allow."

'I don't know about that. How about ghosts?" said Mrs. More.

"Well, how about 'em? Ever see one of 'em, Nancy?" asked her husband, banteringly.

"Yes; I have, an' I've told you so often an' often."

"Yes; you've told me lots of times you've [illegible] never showed any [illegible] raspingly.

[illegible]

"Some folks couldn't see one right afore 'em. Saul More, you're so material that ye can't see nothin' thinner'n one of them old skeleton horses you're always gittin' stuck with in yer trades down t the court house." Mrs. More delivered he' lf thus and they turned an inviting gaze on Zeke Stebbins and awaited the latter's revelation with no little interest.

Zeke cleared his throat, but spoke not

"Well?" queried More, noting the visitor's thoughtful mien.

"I was thinkin' 'bout the spook question," Zeke answered, slowly

"Drat the spook question.

"W'y, Saul More!" Mrs. More's voice was full of censure.

"The spook question's a mighty paramount question—a truly momentous question," asserted Stebbins.

"That it is," asserted Mrs More. Saul, you oughter be ashamed of yourself

"S'pose I oughter be, but I ain't. Now, Zekiel"

'I 'low I seen a ghost, myself," declared Stebbins, in a way that made Barry feel uncomfortable, although the boy was no coward, as events will amply demonstrate.

"Whose ghost?" asked Mrs. More, eagerly

"Eb Nickerson's," said Zeke.

Mrs. More clapped her hands together, but she looked scared, though she appeared triumphant, too.

"The very one! There, Saul More, what did I tell you?"

"Eh?"

It was evident that Saul did not want to commit himself.

"What did I tell you?" the woman repeated. "And you laughed at me."

"Ha, ha'd right out, didn't I?"

"Yes; you did."

"An' so I do ag'in, at you an' Zeke both. Thar ain't no sech things as spooks. I tell you."

Poor material fool!" Mrs. More's tones expressed contemptuous pity.

"Well, there ain't," Saul persisted.

"Well, there is," snapped his wife, "an' I know it, an' Zeke knows it, an' maybe that's enough.'

"I reckon 'tis," replied Saul, banteringly "If the world was a-comin' to an end tomorrer night, an' you an' Zeke was informed of it, I 'low you'd git right out an' tell the rest. You folks deliver news when it's fresh, an' no mistake."

Saul More, yer forgettin' yourself," excalimed Zeke Stebbins. "Yer wife's a good truthful woman. As for me, of course, I've traveled, an' that's more'n most folks round here can say for themselves, an' I've sometimes related strange sights an' scenes I've taken part in, much to the surprise of you slow coaches 'round here; but I'm no gossiping scandal-monger, an' don't go 'round lyin' about my neighbors, livin' or dead, an' I wouldn't take any advantage of Eb Nickerson to tell any romantic tales about his ghost. I've seen that spook, Saul More—I've really seen it."

'An' so have I, ye unbelievin' critter," spoke up Mrs. More, an' so, I reckon, have others that hain't got forked tongues or material minds."

I've seen it too, pa," declared Barry.

You, Barry

It was Mrs More who spoke

Yes ma'am

"And ye never told yer mother. What a comfort it 'ud a been fer me to know my son 'd seen it, too. Besides, 'twas your duty to help me convince yer cranky and material father. If we could make him believe in spooks likely in time he'd get to believe somethin' else."

"Well, ma, I've seen it," Barry continued, not heeding his mother's argument.

"Good for ye, Barry," cried Zeke, straightening up his long figure and slapping the boy heavily on the shoulde.r

"Cracky! Zeke Stebbins, yer a hard hitter '

' You bet I am, boy, an' I tell ye confidentially there's some folks that hand has struck when it's been on its travels that wasn't in shape to comment on it for some time afterwards, but I don't s'pose your father 'll believe that till he gits hit with it himself—the unb'lievin', impecunious—what is it you call 'em, Mrs. More?"

"Ye mean materialist, I reckon."

"Reckon I do, Mrs. More. Not much material wasted in Saul More, howsumever, except in his feet and hands, for he's all long an' no wide. Yer shoulders slope up like a capital A—they ain't fightin' shoulders, nohow."

Saul laughed good-humoredly and began to jump 'round the room and spar very awkwardly. Zeke stood up and faced him, waving his fists frantically

Barry got between them.

"I reckon I could lick both of ye he said, coolly.

So you could, my son," guffawed Mrs. More.

CHAPTER II.

FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE SPOOK QUESTION."

"Listen to the boy," exclaimed Saul More, admiringly. "Nancy, ain't he a corker?"

"Saul More, I don't want to hear no more such slanguinary language. Besides, I don't want to make Barry think he's smart in imitatin' you two triflin' men's monkey business. Now, both of ye quit your bluffin'. You ain't neither one of ye anything like Napoleon or the Hon. Morrissey. I wouldn't put it past myself to wallop both of ye an' the boy, too. Leastways, he says he can trounce both of ye an' I know I can spank him sensible, for I've done it many a time and he's deserved it, too, I reckon. I've seen Eb Nickerson's spirit an' Zeke has seen it an' Barry has seen it, an' I calkilate three of a kind and ther picter cards 'll beat any old two-spot in the deck Saul More

Nancy More assumed a superior look as she spoke

"Whew! What an intellectual golossus I married!" exclaimed More, whistling shrilly. "I expect the time 'll come when women folks like her 'll steer the ship of state—they're supplyin' wind enough to run it already. If they're kept back in the dark after everyone else is in the light it'll be all on account o' thar ignorance an' superstition. People that s'ociate with dead folks ain't no fit rulers for live folks. Ghosts ain't in it, Nancy. Pshaw, I'd say 'shucks' to any ghost, right to his face, or her's, either, for that matter. I ain't no respecter o' persons, leastways after they've been shown the way. Eb Nickerson's dead, an' I reckon that's the last to be said about him. What if he was murdered? Ain't he dead an' buried, just the same?"

"Some folks say," began Barry "

"Oh, yes, I know what some folks say, my son," said Saul More, bridling. "Some folks say Eb Nickerson ain't really dead. But I seen 'im in his coffin, lookin' r'al nat'ral, an' so did plenty of other folks an' everyone 'round Morgue Corners seen me an' Zeke an' Deacon Bane an' old Captain Cadger lower him into the ground, an' Limpy Tidd, the sexton 'll swear he put the usual amount o' dirt on him, an' it was wet an' muddy an' heavy an' full o' stones—jist the kind o' dirt to make a fool dead man that wanted to be a ghost pretty much discouraged with his prospect. No, Nancy; you hain't seen Eb Nickerson, nor you hain't seen 'im, Zeke Stebbins, nor you, either, Barry More. No; you hain't seen him, dead or alive, since the day he was buried up on 'Squire Pardon's hillside. Nobody else hain't, nuther."

"Say, pa, I've—" began Barry.

"Shucks! Saul, I've seen—" began Nancy.

"Why, Saul More, I sartainly seen 'im—I mean his ghost—" began Zeke Stebbins.

"Drat ye all for a lot o' fools. Pshaw! ye didn't see nothin' of the kind. But thar's others that's cracked with the same club. Why, there's folks that claim the critter's alive that killed President Lincoln an' got shot an' died himself. There's folks that believe in the 'Flyin' Dutchman' an' the 'Wanderin' Jew.' I s'pose there's people that think Christopher Columbus is still a sailin' the ocean blue an' likely ye could find some one with an awful imagination that 'ud say he—more'n likely 'twould be she, though—had seen Adam himself. Why, there's old Mrs. Willet, over at the Grove, she tells she has died an' been sent to the bad place an' the devil has built a fire on 'er three times; but you an' everyone else thinks that poor old critter is crazy. And now I ask you, in all fairness, how much crazier is she than you be? Say, Barry, it's about time to make sugar, an' I'm goin' to keep you out in the bush with me day an' night, where ye can't hear yer mother's foolish talk, that ought to know better."

"Yer goin' to leave Barry right in the house with me ev'ry evenin', so I wont have to stay alone. So, there, Saul More!"

'Fraid o' spooks, I reckon, Nancy."

'Yes, I am—that's so."

"An' want 'em to catch your little boy, too, I reckon. Nice mother you are," said Saul. "I'm goin' to take him to the sugar bush for safe keepin', an', besides, I need his help. You can come along, too, an' watch the bilin' while we gather an' fetch the sap—that is, if yer squeamish about stayin' in the house whar I contend all women belong, eh, Zeke?"

Zeke coughed.

'I don't have no woman myself, I bein' a batch," he said, diplomatically, "an' that bein' the case I don't presume to lay down no rules for no women. Far be it for me to say whether they shall stay in the house or not. Lord! Why should I care? Sometimes I've waited hours for 'em to go out before sayin' anything to the men about appletrees, for some of 'em are sure to spoil sales. They like to look at my picter-book, but they don't believe my tree'll produce such big and beautiful friut as the paintin's represent They've heard appletree agents before an' they wont believe no more of 'em. Most men are different. If they wasn't I reckon I'd a come back home to stay long ago and settled down to dry up an' blow away with the rest o' you. Morgue Corners wont ever be destroyed by a cyclone—it'll go away little by little, on the every-day zephyrs. Jest dry dead dust is all that's left on it now, I calkilate."

"Oh, Morgue Corners is a smart little burg," dissented Saul. "There's no flies on Morgue Corners, Zeke."

'Nothin' here for the flies to git onto, I reckon," replied Zeke, dryly.

Mrs. More laughed.

"I guess Mr. Stebbins is right," she said "Everything here at the Corners is dead since the blacksmith shop burned down an' all the oil excitement died out. Why, thar ain't been a magic lantern to the school house in two years June comin'. Why, Saul More, yer so dead yourself that ye have forgot yer hospitality so far that ye hain't asked Mr. Stebbins to set up an' have a mouthful o' breakfast—an' here's the breakfast table standin' 'round waitin' for him an' everything gettin' cold."

'Sure. But, Nancy, I reckon them spooks must have made you forgit what's due to a guest, also. Set up, Zeke, an' have a cup of coffee, even if you can't eat none o' that cold meat an' pancakes."

"I reckon Mr. Stebbins can have some hot cakes if he wants 'em," snapped Nancy.

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"Folks don't have to eat cold victuals in my house, nohow."

"Now, I jedge I've got 'er on 'er mettle," remarked Saul, gleefully.

"I reckon ye have, you fool. Set up now, Mr. Stebbins."

"Couldn't eat much of anything, Mrs. More. I took breakfast at Abner Strang's, down by the branch."

"They say Mrs. Strang's a powerful good cook," said More. "I s'pose after drinkin' her good coffee, Nancy's slops 'll come pretty near makin' ye ill, but you'd better try a cup of it. I'll guarantee it wont kill ye. Now, you Nancy, be carefull."

"If there's any woman in Green county can make better coffee than I can, Saul More," said Nancy, "I want ye to name 'er. Who is she, now?"

She pushed her husband into a corner and with one hand clutching his neck shook the other, clenched, threatening in his face.

"Name her!" she commanded.

While she awaited an answer, Zeke Stebbins laughed till he coughed, then he grew black in the face and choked.

Barry snatched the coffee pot from the table and held the spout to Stebbins' lips and tipped it up. Stebbins swallowed and spluttered and got his breath.

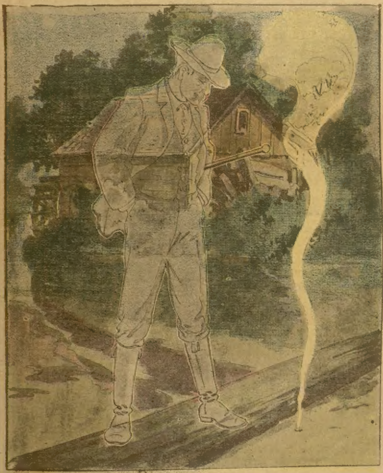
"What lovely coffee, Mrs. More,' he cried. "Give me some with milk in it, if you please."

"I wont do it. I'll give you some with cream in it. Thar don't no milk go into no coffee here. I wasn't brought up to cook in my own mother's tavern in New York state, to come out here to Ohio to forgit it, I reckon. Say, Mr. Stebbins, my boy's got a bit of fightin' blood in him, and it comes from my folks. Set up."

CHAPTER III.

"LOTS AN' SLATHERS" OF OIL.

"What beautiful coffee, Mrs. More," excalimed Stebbins as he took the first swallow from the cup that Nancy set before him. It was really good coffee—cream, sugar, everything about it.



Fire blazed up and out of the hole.

"Thought you'd say so, Mr. Stebbins," Mrs. More said in a self-satisfied way.

"I don't reckon that Zeke dared to say anything else after the way you just made war on me," said Saul, glumly. "Barry and I know what kind o' stuff Nancy calls coffee, eh, Barry?"

"Well," returned Barry, judiciously, "I must say I'd rather have lemonade, that is the kind that has real lemons in it an' don't look like dyestuff. Oh, that red circus lemonade that I got down to the courthouse last summer. It makes me sick yet."

"Yes," mused Stebbins, aloud, "cerkises is red all through—red wagons, red lemonade, and red picters an' I guess the picters is most allurin' of all."

"Deceivin', like the picturs in yer appletree book, I prognosticate," chimed in Saul.

"But, really, Saul, this coffee is fine," said Stebbins, evasively. "Mrs. More, will you kindly fill my cup ag'in, an' give it that same artistic touch with the sugar an' the real cream. How many cows are ye keepin' this season, Saul?"

"Only two; but, say, Zeke, whar did you see Eb Nickerson's ghost?"

"Down by his old mill. What a pile of ruins that mill is."

"When, Zeke?"

"Two or three times since he died, an' that was five years ago goin' on six. I seen the spook every time alike. It was walkin' 'round on the old boom that used to hold Eb's logs. It 'ud kind o' stop an' lean over the water as if tryin' to smell it. That millpond is stagnant an' nasty, but likely it smells good to Eb after what he's used to of late."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Mrs. More. "You oughtn't to talk so, Zeke Stebbins. It ain't fer none of us to judge where Eb went—the Lord 'll take care of all that an' it's all we can do to mind our own p's and q's so he'll take care of us when our time comes. Besides, Eb Nickerson wasn't such a powerful bad man—only graspn'. There's lot of others. How about the man that bought up all o' the oil leases an' froze everyone else out, and are holdin' 'em, waitin, waitin', waitin' fer the greasy money to run right into their pockets out of other men's land. That's a shame, Zeke; but what can we expect when smart men"—she looked at Saul—"that don't b'lieve in no nonsense"—she pointed her finger at Saul—"will sign away all their rights to thar own an' have no thought o' their wives that have a right to expect 'em to make their fortins an' buy 'em silk gowns an' set 'em up in society somewhere away from Morgue Corners, where the rain ain't shy o' fallin', an' the grass ain't afraid to grow. Why, nothin' is a good crop here but weeds an' sassy children like Barry. I s'pose I ought to be thankful I ain't no worse off than I am—one's enough for me."

"Too many if ye have to fill their heads with foolishness about spooks," interpolated Saul. "Now, Nancy, honest Injun, whar did you see Eb Nickerson's ghost. I most forget yer yarn."

"I've told it often enough an' straight enough, Saul More. You know I seen it down back o' the mill. I seen it thar twice. I seen it poke a stick down in the muck, side o' the branch, an' then I seen fire flashin' 'round 'im an' was too scared to look at any more. Same thing twice over—once last summer an' once three years ago in the spring. Now, Barry," turning to the boy, "what did you see?"

"Same thing as you saw, mother, only I wasn't scared much an' hardly thought at the time that I was gazin' on a spirit; but if Eb Nickerson's spook is goin' 'round that is certainly what I saw."

"When was it, Barry?" asked Saul.

"Oh, last summer. Do you remember when I went to the court house to git Doctor Bluemass to come up and dose old Kit when she was rollin' an' groanin with the stomachache, an' Doc Bluemass snapped me on the head with his finger an' told me he wanted my folks to distinctly understand that he wasn't no hoss doctor an' I better go over an' git Doctor Sweetnum, the homypathy doctor, an' then the homypathy doctor said I mustn't mind Doc Bluemass' queer antics 'cause he was kinder off, anyhow, an' probably had a date to kill a man that night, an' likely felt kind o' tough about it. 'Doc Bluemass must be tortured by remorse sometimes,' said Doc Sweetnum. 'Ef he ain't, the devil can't never shame him an' then where will he go when he dies?' Doc Sweetnum came back with me an' old Kit died an' Doc Bluemass tried to get you to sue the homypathy doctor for breach o' promise."

"You mean malpractice, Barry," corrected Mrs. More.

"I guess I do. Do you remember that night, pa?"

"Yes." Saul was gloomy. "As you say, old Kit died an' Doc Sweetnum tried to make me pay him three dollars; but that talk about the malpractice kind o' quieted him down an' he helped me git another hoss dirt cheap."

"Oh, he did, did he?" screamed Mrs. More, as she filled Stebbins' cup again. "I remember that hoss cost you sixty dollars an' wasn't worth five. Besides, he died o' heaves—jist blowed himself to death—in six weeks. I always figgered Doc Sweetnum got about fifteen dollars o' yer sixty, an'

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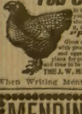

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Eb. Nickerson's Spook.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

that paid him well for killin' old Kit with his great twenty-seventh solution. Why, he claims to use the mild power, but the dope he left in the pail 'ud take the scales off'n a team boiler. I put an old hoe, an old trowel, an' old hammer, an' two pair o' old shears, all black with rust, into it, an' they come out shinin' like new. If you'd put the law to him as ye ought to I'd be a good witness for ye, but ye never take my advice."

Saul felt that he was getting into hot water.

"So 'twas that night ye seen the spook, as ye call it, Barry?"

"Yes."

"An' what did it look like?"

"Just like Eb Nickerson."

"An' what was he or it a-doin', my son?"

"I saw him punch a hole into the muck down by the side of the branch with a cane, or some stick like one. Then he pulled up the cane and dropped a lighted match down into the hole he had made with it."

"What happened then?" asked Zeke Stebbins, setting down his cup and facing Barry with his mouth open.

"Fire blazed up out of the hole and then went out."

"So? And what did the ghost do then, my boy?" pursued Stebbins.

"I thought it kind o' snickered, then it went out o' sight in them willows by the old waste-sluice and I didn't see it any more."

"What do ye think now, Saul More?" asked Nancy, shrilly.

"Probably 'twas some man ye all seen," answered Saul, doggedly, "some man that looks somethin' like Eb Nickerson did."

"Humph!" grunted Zeke Stebbins. "The ghost was prob'ly drillin' for oil an' it's oil I come in to talk about this mornin'. Thar's lots of it in Fortune Valley, over beyand—lots an' slathers of it, Saul More."

CHAPTER IV.

OFF FOR FORTUNE VALLEY.

"Don't give us no more gas like that, Zeke Stebbins," exclaimed Saul More, excitedly. "Gas is all we've any of us got thus far. Save yours for the farmers you sell appletrees to."

"But this is straight, Saul."

"Straight as a fish-hook, but it ain't baited proper to catch me."

Stebbins gazed honestly in More's face.

"What are ye up to, Zeze?"

"Up to nothin', Saul. What d'ye mean?"

"Tryin' to git up some sort o' comp'ny an' have me put in a little cash, I suppose."

"Why, Saul, we all know you hain't got no spondoolicks," replied Zeke, with scant diplomacy.

"Of course ev'rybody hereabouts knows that, Saul, even if that's all they do know," remarked Mrs. More, vitriolically. "More coffee, Mr. Stebbins? Don't be bashful, now."

The appletree agent guffawed. He had never before received a suggestion that anyone could, by any possibility, imagine him bashful.

"I guess I will, Mrs. More, just to convince you that I ain't bashful, for I would not know how to use bashfulness in my business. Let's see—this makes four cups, don't it?"

Mrs. More nodded.

"That's a good deal of coffee," said Zeke, musingly. "Well, it's awful good, anyhow. Fill the cup once more, Mrs. More, if you've got any more coffee to put in it."

"'Course I have more, Mr. Stebbins. Don't class me with Aunt Carrie Hatch."

"Say, Zeke, Lord knows you're welcome to all o' Nancy's coffee ye c'n stand," said Saul; "but I'd like to ask you one question."

"Fire ahead."

"Have you jist been on a spree?"

"No, siree-ee, but I am powerful dry an' the coffee's powerful good. What was ye sayin' about Aunt Carrie Hatch, Mrs. More. Thank you, ma'am."

"You was onsinuatin' about my offerin' you coffee when I hadn't none. Once I'n Miss Smith an' Miss Wraggles an' Miss Lamb was invited up to Aunt Carrie Hatch's, to meet her niece, Miss Skillman, from Cleveland—she's a music teacher, you know. Well, we all got thar an' Parson Dodgem dropped up, too, 'n', of course, Aunt Carrie had to invite him to tea with us all."

"And, of course, he stayed," suggested Saul More. "Parsons mostly do when they are asked to tea."

"Well, 'twasn't your tea he drank, anyhow." She scowled on Saul and then smiled on Zeke and continued: "Miss Carrie had some fine plum-sass that day, a little mite too sour, but good as plum-sass goes, an' when we'd all had a helpin' around, she offered us some more, sayin' she had lots of it in a turreen on the kitchen table. They wouldn't none of us say yes, but she urged Miss Skillman till she 'lowed she'd have another dish—I reckon 'twas jist to please her—an' then she turned her batteries on Parson Dodgem an' begged and besought him to have just another dish. 'Land knows, there's lot of it,' she says, knowin' Parson Dodgem had already refused an' was a good man sot in his ways. 'Well,' says Parson Dodgem, 'it's good an' I don't care if you do give me another helpin', Sister Hatch.' Then Aunt Carrie turned ev'ry color 'n' begun to hem an' haw. She hadn't no more o' the plum-sass an' had to say so. We all had to snicker an' the parson he looked at her and then at all of us, in such a funny way. 'Well, well,' he said, 'I s'pose likely yer plum-sass evaporated, Sister Hatch—don't plum-sass evaporate sometimes, Sister More?' I said I never heard so, but I 'lowed plum-sass might evaporate if there was only a little left and someone wanted it powerful bad. Then we all laughed, Aunt Carrie Hatch with the rest, but still all colors and in that way our equalabratum was restored."

"Your equalwhatryham?" asked Barry, irreverently.

"Never you mind, Barry. You'll have to read the dictionary all your spare time if ye expect to converse with your mother," said Saul, curtly. "Now, Zeke, I'm glad you've quit spreein'; you used ter git drunker than an owl—a reg'lar b'iled owl—ev'ry time anything happened, an' sometimes because things didn't happen, though I'll allow you've kept pretty straight for some years."

"Of course I have, an' I've prospered an' saved money."

"Well, then, you just use it, if you want to git up any oil company, and don't try to bamboozle me into sellin' a cow to stake yer scheme. Nancy wouldn't let me do anything of the kind."

"That I wouldn't," said Nancy.

"You're away off, Saul." Zeke set his cup down before him, and, with a deprecatory gesture as Mrs. More held the coffee pot out toward him, resolutely withdrew from the table. "I ain't after any money. I ain't got any stock to sell. I'm just goin' over into Fortune Valley to prospect a little, an' I want you folks to let Barry go with me. That is what I'm here about this mornin'. Wouldn't you like to go, Barry?"

"You bet."

"But Barry's got to help me in the sugar bush," protested Saul More.

"Oh, I guess you don't need him. Besides, Saul you ain't usin' your hosses now, an' wont need 'em till plowin' time an' they're eatin' jest the same, an' if you'll let me and Barry take 'em to Fortune Valley I'll pay you for 'em."

"How much?" asked Saul, calculatingly.

"Two dollars a day."

"That 'ud be all right, especially if you come back before plowin'."

"I'll do that."

"Well, Nancy, what do you say? Can the boy go with Zeke?"

"Do let me, mother," pleaded Barry. "I am dying to go somewhere, an' I'd like to go to Fortune Valley an' see the sights there, especially those mysterious mounds everyone talks about. Did you ever see 'em, Zeke?"

"Time an' time ag'in," declared Stebbins.

"And would we go near 'em?"

"Sure. All around 'em and right to 'em. They're a sight, Barry, and no young chap's eddication 'ud be complete if he didn't investigate 'em," said Zeke, alluringly. "Saul and Mrs. More, you shouldn't deny your boy this chance to accompany an experienced traveler into this interestin' region. Besides his trip there might be the means of settin' yer family way up on gold hill among the nabobs an' favored ones of the earth. Think of all the oil there, Mrs. More."

Under the blandishments of this experienced canvasser, Mrs. More was already thinking and her mental resolution to keep Barry at home was being broken down.

"And you don't drink no more, do you, Mr. Stebbins?" she asked, anxiously.

"Not a drop, ma'am."

"And it'll all be perfectly safe, I hope."

"Safe as a Sunday school picnic."

"Shall I let Barry go, Saul?"

"I don't care."

"Whoopee!" yelled Barry.

Next morning the boy set out with Zeke, upon a journey that was to lead to strange adventures.

The characters of this interesting story will appear in further chapters of next week's Ledger. Readers will do well to follow and see what happens them. Cameras and patterns are given free to all subscribers as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

◆

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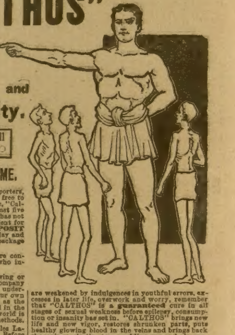

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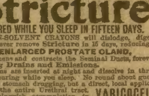

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On the birthday or namesday of the Tsar or his Consort (public holidays these), a picked number of students are invited from the university, institutes, academies, technical schools and gymnasiums, to a performance at one of the Imperial theaters, where they will regale them with sherbet and fruit. On taking their departure, each one receives a box of sweets, tied around with ribbon in the Imperial colors and decorated with the portrait of the hostess.

At the Palace such events are commemorated by the making of a huge cake. In shape it resembles a pine cone, its center hollow; its outside worked in white sugar, to represent foliage, and the interstices are studded with sugared fruits. It is about a yard in diameter, and after a portion has been served to the Imperial family, it is then distributed among the rest of the household.

On fete days the Tsar and his wife, after breakfasting in their private room, attend service in the palace church. They then proceed to the grand dining room and partake of luncheon. After luncheon, there is sent up to their room a plate of chocolate around which are arranged tiny packets of sweets, wrapped in various colored papers.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon it is their majesties' custom to take either a walk or a drive. It is strikingly illustrative of their unobtrusive nature and love of privacy to see the Tsar and Tsarina, when in residence at the Winter palace, taking a drive unaccompanied by a single soul but their coachman.

When at Peterhof it is not in the big Palace that they take up their abode, but in one of the three enlarged cottages close by; cottages, clad with Virginia creeper and ivy, and fringed by some of the loveliest roses any one could wish to see.

The Tsar's cottage is much larger than the others. There is also more accomodation than in the Alexandria dwelling used by his late father and now by his mother, which is ludicriously small, considering that it has to serve as an Imperial home It has only one staircase and one entrance.—Pearson's Magazine.

◆

A wise man never wants what he can't get.

Snow Mushrooms.

Vaughan Cornish, F. R. G. S., who has recently made a journey across Canada and British Columbia to study there the surface forms of snow, describes in the current number of Pearson's Magazine the great snow mushrooms that he discovered in the upper valleys of the Selkirk mountains.

Mushrooms of great variety in shape and size, he says, are produced by the large flakes of sticky snow falling on the flat tops of tree stumps. Some of the mushrooms have long stems—I noticed one on a tree trunk twenty-five feet in height—others are little more than bosses showing above the snow on the ground. Mushrooms on short stalks always have little hollows beneath them—into which one may easily fall—for their caps shelter the ground beneath from its proper share of snow. The mushroom that formed on the twenty-five-foot trunk measured twelve feet five inches in diameter. The diameter of the tree itself at the top was but four feet, so that the snow projected beyond the trunk for four feet three inches. Its depth was about the same as the depth of the snow on the ground—some five feet. On a short tree trunk, having a diameter of two feet, the snow cap measured nine feet across and four feet in thickness.

The district where we found the mushrooms in perfection was very narrow from east to west, but they are probably equally fine southwards in the Selkirks; indeed, I heard of them from miners, who came from the Kootenay district, as occurring there, about 120 miles south of Glacier House.

I took some pains to determine the weight of the mushroom snow-caps. For this purpose, after measuring up the mushrooms, I determined the density of the snow at different depths. Calculating from these data, I find that one ton may be taken as approximately the weight of an ordinary mushroom. In years of exceptionally heavy snowfall, such as that of 1898-9, mushroom caps weighing as much as two tons would be formed upon the largest stumps.

◆

Wise Woman.

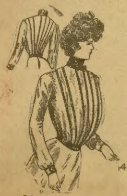
Husband—Confound it! I lost money on the races again today.

Mrs. Moretolern—I think you are very foolish to bet your money before the race, my dear; how can you tell which horse will win?

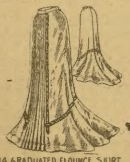
Beautiful Patterns Free---An Unparalleled Offer.

The patterns shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles, and are unequalled for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They sell from the stores from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 25 cents and any TWO of these patterns FREE. Six months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you are wise you will take advantage of it at once.

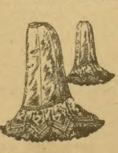
REMEMBER, to avoid mistakes, you must first give the number of the Pattern wanted—second, do not fail to give bust measure for waist, or waist measure if skirt is desired. Unless you do as here stated we will not know what to send you. Also, do not fail to enclose money. PATTERN DEPT., CHICAGO LEDGER, CHICAGO, ILL.



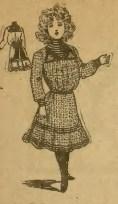
3999 SHIRT WAIST
32-40 BUST



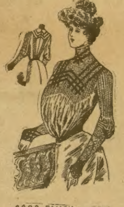
4014 GRADUATED FLOUNCE SKIRT
22-30 WAIST



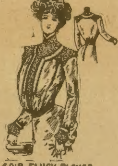
4007 7-GORED
PETTICOAT 22-30 WAIST



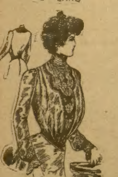
3996 GRLS COSTUME
6-12 YEARS



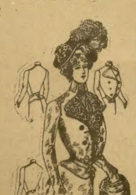
4003 FANCY BLOUSE
32-40 BUST



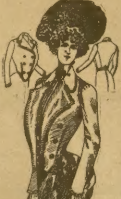
4018 FANCY BLOUSE
32 TO 40 BUST



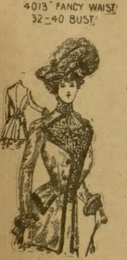
4013 FANCY WAIST
32-40 BUST



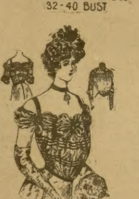
4017 ETON BLOUSE
32-40 BUST



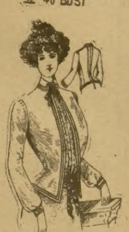
3997 ETON JACKET
32-40 BUST



4011 LOUIS XVI COAT
32-40 BUST



4012 EVENING WAIST
32-40 BUST



3998 HOUSE JACKET
32-40 BUST

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We want a boy in every town to act as agent. We start you without asking a cent in advance. Fill out the blank below and we will send you a bundle of BLADES AND LEDGERS by mail, also report blanks, instructions, and certificate of agency. You report each week, paying only for papers you sell. You keep 2 cents out of every 5 cent sale and send us 3 cents. In this way you can earn a nice sum each week. No experience necessary. We send full instructions so you can begin at once. Tear out the coupon below and send it in.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Boyce Building, Chicago.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

Why Dogs Cannot Read.

A great many years ago, even before automobiles were invented, Mr. Dog used to live with Mr. Man, just as he does now. Any one would think that he should have learned company manners and know how to behave almost as nicely as your eldest sister when there is company to dinner, but any one of you who is acquainted with very many dogs will know that he did nothing of the kind. This Mr. Dog of whom I speak did commence to learn a great deal, but he found that there appeared to be drawbacks too much.

One day he was watching Mr. Man churn, when Mr. Man said that if Mr. Dog wanted to have more fun than he had ever heard of he would better learn to church. Mr. Dog was always looking for fun, and he said that would be just the very thing he had been wanting to learn for a long time. Mr. Man rigged a contrivance at once, which made the churn work beautifully whenever Mr. Dog walked up a little row of slats. Mr. Man said that the greatest fun of all was to be tied fast, so he tied Mr. Dog fast to the string. Mr. Dog walked up the slats and had fun for quite a while, and then he found that he was so very tired that it would be more fun to lie down and rest. He called to Mr. Man to come and let him loose, but Mr. Man was busy having fun chopping wood and so did not hear Mr. Dog, who had to keep on walking, so that the slats would not slide out from under him and leave him suspended by the neck.

After a long time the milk was all churned into butter, and Mr. Man came and let Mr. Dog loose. Mr. Dog did not even say "Much obliged" to Mr. Man, but he chawled off and lay down and slept for two days and nights without ever waking up.

A few days later Mr. Man's son Tommy was working his best at carting apples in a little wagon from the orchard to the cellar. He was very tired and wanted to stop, but he did not dare, for his father had told him to take them all in. He smiled behind his ears when he saw Mr. Dog coming, and he looked just as happy as only a boy can can when he smiles that way.

"Good morning, Tommy," said Mr. Dog as he came up. "You look as happy as a puppy with a five-pound tenderloin steak."

"Oh, yes; I am having such fun here," replied Tommy. Then he asked Mr. Dog if he did not want to have some fun, too; but Mr. Dog remembered about the churn, when he could not stop when he wanted to, and he said he guessed he would try to get along without fun that day. But Tommy said that it was just perfectly glorious, and that if Mr. Dog would only try it, he would let him look at his picture book. That sounded nice, so Mr. Dog let Tommy harness him to the little wagon. Tommy piled the apples into the wagon and Mr. Dog had to draw the load to the house, and it was all up hill all the way, too. After four or five trips Mr. Dog became tired and wanted to stop, but Tommy would not unharness him, and so, of course, he had to go on.

Tommy made Mr. Dog keep pulling these heavy loads until they had taken all the apples to the cellar. Then Tommy unharnessed him and asked him how he liked learning to draw the wagon. "I didn't like it one single bit," said Mr. Dog, "and I want my picture book to look at." So Tommy got the picture book, and Mr. Dog took it off and sat down under a tree in the field. He was looking at the pictures and having a fine time when Mrs. Cow came along and looked over his shoulder. "My goodness me!" she exclaimed. "Do read to me what it says under that picture of the cat and the fiddle and the cow jumping up in the air." Mr. Dog could not read a bit, but he was ashamed to say so, so he made up a rhyme. "Why certainly," he said:

Bow wow! Sukey the cow,
She turned a flipflap in the air;
When she landed a cat
Said if she could do that
She could be the prima donna in his opera troupe.

You see, Mr. Dog was in such a hurry that he couldn't make the last rhyme, but Mrs. Cow did not know much about poetry, so she did not know the difference.

"How perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed. "I wonder if a cat would take me in an opera trope if I turned a flipflap like that?"

"Of course she would," said Mr. Dog. "He wouldn't be much of a cat if he didn't, and, anyway, whatever you see in books is true." People really thought so in those days, as they were dog days, for surely you have heard grown-up folks say "every dog has its day."

"Do you really think I could turn a flipflap?" asked Mrs. Cow, with a simper.

"I am sure of it. You are so graceful," said Mr. Dog. Mrs. Cow made a very low bow and jumped up in the air to turn a flipflap, but she only got half way around and landed on the top of her head. Her horns ran so far into the ground that she was stuck fast, and there she was, standing on her head, with her feet wildly waving in the air. She kicked and struggled, but could not get loose and she was just about to have a rush of blood to the head when Mr. Man came along and helped her turn right side up again. But poor Mrs. Cow was a sight! One horn was crumpled, and her neck was shut up just like your uncle's telescope when it is closed. She tried to look for Mr. Dog, but her eyes were between her shoulders, and she could only see straight ahead. "Rub her neck!" shouted Mr. Man, and he and Mr. Dog rubbed her neck until it came out again. She looked very pale, and said if Mr. Man would please excuse her she would go sit in the hammock for a while and rest.

While she was in the hammock trying to think how it happened Mr. Cat came along. As soon as she saw him Mrs. Cow remembered all about the opera troupe, and she was just getting up to do another flipflap when Mr. Dog came along. He was afraid she would poke holes in Mr. Man's front porch and that he would get blamed for it, so he shouted as loud as he could "Rubber neck!" trying to do just as Mr. Man had done. When Mrs. Cow heard this she ran at Mr. Dog as hard as she could, and Mr. Dog remembered that he had urgent business elsewhere. He ran as fast as his feet would carry him, but he was so tired from carting the apples that it was not very fast. Mrs. Cow soon caught him, and she got that crumpled horn under him and tossed him so high in the air that he thought he would never come down.

If Mr. Dog had not fallen on a haystack, he would have been killed, but the hay broke his fall, and he was only shaken up. As he crawled down to the front of the haystack he heard a voice, and then he saw Tommy sitting in the shade and reading out of his picture book: "This is the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that—"

"Is that in the book?" asked Mr. Dog.

"Of course it is, or you wouldn't hear me reading it," said Tommy.

"Well, then," said Mr. Dog, "I am through with books. I don't know how to read, and what is more, I will never learn."

He kept his word, and to this day dogs cannot even say their A, B, C's. If you do not believe it, just get your dog to try it.

A Queer Dog.

This is what a boy once wrote in an essay on dogs with reference to the dachshund: "The dockshound is a dog notwithstanding apeerencies. He has fore legs, two in front and two behind, and they aren't on speaking terms. I wunst made a dockshund out of a cowcumber an' fore matchis, and it lookt as nacheral as life. Dockshounds is farely intelligent considerin' thare shaip. Thare brains bein' so far away from thare tales it bothers them sum to wag the lattur. I wunst noo a dockshund who was too impashunt to wate till he cood signal the whole length of his boddy when he wanted to wag his tale, so he maid it up with his tale thet when he wanted it to wag he would shake his rite ear, and when the tale seen it shake it would wag."

Football in Japan.

Among the many things that Japan borrowed from China was football, said to have been introduced as early as the middle of the seventh century. The emperor of Toba II. was an expert player and got up a club at his palace. But, as most Oriental races are averse to hard work and active games, football must have been played in a different manner from that in which American boys play it. Nevertheless, the Japanese form seems to have been popular, and we may trace the beginnings of professional games to an emperor and his court, of whom it is told that in a time of poverty they earned a little extra money by teaching the art of football.

Birds That Sew.

The most curious of all birds are the tailor, or sewing birds of India. They are little yellow creatures not much larger than one's thumb. That the snakes and the monkeys cannot rob the nests the tailor bird picks up a dead leaf, flies up into the tree and with a fizer for a thread and its bill for a needle sews the leaf to a green one hanging from the tree. The sides are sewed up, an opening to the nest thus built being left at the top. That a nest with the dainty little eggs is swinging in the tree no snake, nor monkey, and not even man would have the least suspicion.

How Elephants Are Fed.

Elephants in the Indian army are fed twice a day. When meal time arrives they are drawn up before piles of food. Each animal's breakfast includes ten pounds of raw rice done up in two-pound packages. The rice is wrapped in leaves and then tied with grass. At the command "Attention!" each elephant raises its trunk and a package is thrown into its capacious mouth. By this method of feeding not a single grain of rice is wasted.

Would Go With Mamma.

Little Girl (to visitor)—My papa's a good man. He'll go to heaven, won't he?

Visitor—Oh, yes, indeed, and are you going to heaven too?

Little Girl—Oh, no! I'm going with mamma.

Not to Be Used on Freddie.

Eddie (to his friend)—Fancy giving your mother a pair of slippers for her birthday.

Freddie—Yes, but I marked 'em, "Only to be worn on the feet."

Diplomatic.

Maude—Now, how old would you suppose me to be?

Jack—As I have no desire to incur your enmity, you will please excuse me.

The Right Symptoms.

Poet—The editor accepted my poem gladly.

Artist—Yes, I understand he was showing symptoms of insanity.

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For ONE yearly subscription we will give choice of any one premium free.
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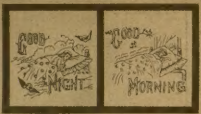
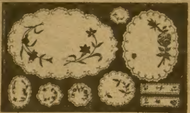


PREMIUM NO. 11.

These beautiful designs of pillow shams, each about 30 inches square or about 1800 square inches, are finely stamped on the best quality of art muslin. We have had the designs embroidered and photographed, and the above pictures are reproductions of these photographs. The two designs require 12 skeins of embroidery floss; the above designs we worked in red and found very attractive in that color, though you might use any color that you prefer—perhaps making each sham a different color. These are very easy to work and very inexpensive, and the effect is dainty and pleasing.

BOYCE'S MONTHLY

Is being greatly improved, extra pages, better stories, finer illustrations, more good reading matter, special features, and new departments added. We are going to make it the most wonderful and popular low-priced publication in the world. Its circulation is now 1,000,000 copies a month—think of it. We want a lot of new subscribers. Anyone and everyone is hereby authorized to raise clubs. We offer premiums for one, three or six subscriptions at 15 cents each. It is an easy matter for anyone to raise a club of six subscribers at 15 cents each and get all six splendid premiums free. The premiums are far better than described. You will be pleased when you get them. Go around among your friends and by a little effort you can earn from one to six of these beautiful home necessities free. We never had such satisfactory premiums as these. Every house needs pillow covers, doilies and fancy pieces. Read our club offer carefully and remember you can get up several clubs. Each club of six with 90 cents entitles you to all six premiums.

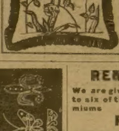


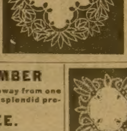
PREMIUM NO. 12.

The illustration represents our beautiful set of table doilies for platters, plates and tumblers, also two napkin rings. The designs are finely stamped on good linen and ready to work. The carnation platter design is 12x18 inches in size, the American Beauty design is 9x12 inches. The napkin rings are in forget-me-not and daisy designs. The 8-inch doily is forget-me-not pattern. The tumbler doily of daisy design is 4 inches around, and the napkin ring is 3x6 inches in size. The doilies look very pretty when embroidered in yellow, blue and green silks. This is an especially pretty set.

PREMIUM NO. 13.

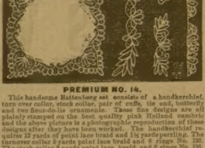
This shows exactly how the handsome rose sofa pillow top we are offering you will look when worked, as this picture is a photographic reproduction of the sofa pillow all embroidered and finished. This design is stamped in BEAUTIFUL colors on the best quality of linen color cottage cloth, which is 22½x22½ inches in size flat, or about 500 square inches. It requires 7 skeins of green, 3 skeins of dark rose and 2 skeins of light rose art floss silk to embroider this. About 6 yards of ribbon are required if a border is desired, tucked as represented in the picture. This is the very latest design and makes as handsome a sofa pillow as anyone would want, and it is not hard or expensive to make.





PREMIUM NO. 15.

This exquisite Battenberg center piece is 20 inches in diameter and is finely stamped on the best quality pink Holland cambric. As with the other designs, we have had this one worked out carefully by our own employes and photographed so that the above picture gives you an exact reproduction of the design when worked. It takes 16 yards of No. 3000 linen braid, size No. 8, and 28 rings size No. 2 to work this. This is the latest Battenberg design out and has a very handsome and rich effect as seen from the illustration of the finished piece.



PREMIUM NO. 14.

This handsome Battenberg set consists of a handkerchief, turn over collar, stock collar, pair of cuffs, tie end, butterfly and two fleur-de-lis ornaments. These fine designs are all plainly stamped on the best quality pink Holland cambric and the above picture is a photographic reproduction of these designs after they have been worked. The handkerchief requires 12 yards of point lace braid and 1½ yards perrling. The turnover collar 5 yards point lace braid and 6 rings No. 135. The stock collar 3 yards point lace braid and 6 rings No. 135. The cuffs require 4 yards point lace braid and 8 rings No. 135 for the pair. The tie end requires 6 yards duchesse braid and 8 rings No. 135. The butterfly 1¼ yards point lace braid. The ornaments require 1½ yards duchesse braid and 6 rings No. 135. The material for these Battenberg designs is inexpensive.

REMEMBER

We are giving away from one to six of these splendid premiums

FREE.

For one subscriber at 15 cents, we give choice of any one premium, postage paid; for three subscribers at 15 cents each you get your choice of three premiums, postage prepaid; for six subscribers you get all six of the premiums, postage prepaid. This is the most liberal offer we have ever made, and by it we hope to add a million new subscribers within the next few weeks. We believe in giving splendid values to those who get up clubs for us. This special offer of 15 cents for a yearly subscription is made to introduce Boyce's Monthly in a lot of new homes. You must collect and send us 15 cents for each subscription you get. Address all subscriptions to

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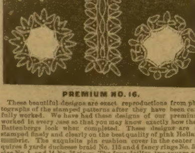

PREMIUM NO. 16.

These beautiful designs are exact reproductions from photographs of the stamped patterns after they have been carefully worked. We have had these designs of our premiums worked in every case so that you may know exactly how these Battenbergs look when completed. These designs are all stamped finely and clearly on the best quality of pink Holland cambric. The exquisite pin cushion cover in the center requires 5 yards duchesse braid No. 115 and 4 fancy rings No. 529, size No. 1, and 14 No. 16 rings. The four doilies, two square and two round, each 9 inches across, require 12 yards of linen braid No. 3000, size No. 6, and 48 rings No. 00. This is a handsome set for a bureau or dressing table, and is easy to make and inexpensive.

SPECIAL OFFER: If you will send a club of six yearly subscribers to Boyce's Monthly at 15 cents each we will give you the six premiums; for a club of three yearly subscribers at 15 cents each we will send you three premiums; for a club of one subscriber we will send one premium. Address Boyce's Monthly, Boyce Building, Chicago, Ill.